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# DWELLING IN THE REALM OF SHADOWS

*An Attempt at Understanding Hegel's Wissenschaft der Logik*

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## ABBREVIATIONS:

<i>WdL</i>	G.W.F.Hegel, <i>Die Wissenschaft der Logik</i> , Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970
<i>PhG</i>	G.W.F. Hegel, <i>Phänomenologie des Geistes</i> , Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970
<i>Logic</i>	G.W.F. Hegel, Mainly <i>Die Wissenschaft der Logik</i> and secondly the first part of <i>Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse</i> ; further also the logic of Hegel in general, i.e. the "system of concepts" developed and exhibited mainly in those works.
<i>Differenz</i>	G.W.F. Hegel, <i>Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie</i> , Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970
<i>Enz.</i>	G.W.F. Hegel, <i>Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundriss, Erster Teil: Die Wissenschaft der Logik (1830)</i> , Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970
<i>PdR</i>	G.W.F.Hegel, <i>Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts (1821)</i> , Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970

### Notes:

I will be following the norm set by Charles Taylor in "Glossary of German Words Used in the Text" on page xi of *Hegel*, Cambridge University Press 1975, regarding the translation of important German terms into english. The references to pagenumbers in *Werke in 20 Bänden* from Suhrkamp Verlag is given such that the first number is a reference to the number of the volume in the collected works and the latter the pagenumber in this book. The same applies to the references to Schelling's works.

## INTRODUCTION

Given the vastness of Hegel's philosophical enterprise and keeping in mind that the truth is the whole, it would seem close to impossible to single out an aspect of his philosophical system, in this case the *Logic*, without misrepresenting it. The many and different readings of Hegel also point to that there may well be that there is no essential core to the system, meaning that there actually is no way to *mis*represent it, since there is nothing there to *represent*. Still, there might be other interesting thoughts and insights that can be used for this or that purpose within other contexts, philosophical or otherwise. Indeed, the thought that philosophy should be a system – that it cannot be one, if it is not one – seems to belong to an age long past.

It might well be claimed that the most significant thought that Hegel ever presented was one that by now has become very common, to the extent that any mention of it can seem redundant. This thought is the one that says that every philosophy is bound to its time, in the sense that it cannot make claims that have universal validity. If this thought is not put at the center of an understanding of Hegel, it could soon seem like Hegel is doing nothing other than interpreting any phenomenon so as to make it fit *his* system and giving such interpretations status as universal truths.

Taking the other view seriously, that the most important claim Hegel makes is that philosophy is its own age understood in thought, questions can be raised: who does not by now recognize the historic character of reason? Why read Hegel, when we already know this?

My simple answer would be: do not read Hegel.

Does that mean that one needs to have strong sympathies towards universalism, that truth is one and unchanging, if Hegel is to be interesting? Before answering this question, I will make some general reflections on universality and the historic character of reason.

I believe there is a fundamental error that lies within the view that reason is more fundamentally historically contingent than not – an error of onesidedness, that soon can become apparent given that the contingent character of reason *itself* is presented as universal, i.e. the view that says that for anything counting as rational, it is determined by historical or other contingent circumstances, and not the other way around. I believe Hegel was highly sensitive of this point, and further that the failure to see this mainly comes from putting onesided focus on certain works of Hegel. The lectures that were published after Hegel's death undoubtedly presents Hegel's own time in thoughts – they make no claim to universality, but for this thought not to become incoherent I believe it has to be balanced with the purely speculative side of Hegel's philosophy, which presents thoughts in purely universal terms, and

hence claims timelessness. However, *WdL* is also a kind of work that contains an explicit treatment of the concept of universality itself, and has as an aim to make concepts like these meaningful and transparent within a whole. At the core of Hegel's philosophy is also the thought of development; as there is evolution in history, concepts also evolve – truth itself has a certain development or evolution, which involves change. When this is contrasted with truth as unchanging, which also is an element in Hegel's philosophy, we apparently arrive at a contradiction: on the one hand truth changes, and on the other it is unchanging. Instead of rejecting Hegel's philosophy on the ground of such a contradiction, I believe it is rather here that we begin to sense its depths. Hegel presents a way to understand truth as both universal and historical, in a way that generally is not that well understood, which when remedied can help to shed light on certain challenges, dilemmas and conflicts that arise when the world is treated conceptually.

There were two prominent cultural influences that had shaped Hegel's world: enlightenment and romanticism, and Hegel can be seen to try to take the best of both while trying to achieve an equilibrium where there were differences. Within romanticism Apollo becomes just as important as Jesus, and while there was a certain nostalgia for past ages there was a positive interest in the mystery of the human being and a sense for its yet undiscovered depths. This in contrast to enlightenment, where the mysteries of the human being was seen as already unveiled, and everything that was possible to know were soon to become fully revealed by the natural sciences. Politically it was an age where the French revolution was one of the most important events, and while supporting its ideals, Hegel became one of the sharpest critics of the negative aspects of a modern enlightened understanding of the idea of freedom, seeing how catastrophes result from forcing abstract ideals on the world.

Philosophically it was an age where Kant was the leading figure, and the romantics wanted more from the human mind than Kant would allow. Kant claimed that there were strict limits to reason when it came to knowledge in relation to what were central to the romantics – for instance the soul. Reason in relation to such objects could only be regulative, i.e. giving direction for understanding, but never actually knowing, such objects. Kant was felt to rely too much on the natural and mechanistic sciences, while making for instance the relationship to God something subjective and private. On a whole Kant was seen to be unsatisfactory in bridging the relationship between the human being and the world – dualism seemed to be the final word. Fichte and Schelling became the leading philosophers who worked after Kant. With their treatment of the concept of intellectual intuition we find a trend in the relationship between Kant and the later German idealists; Kant had an idea of what the idealists wanted, but he did

not think that it was within reach for human beings. Fichte and Schelling moved in more metaphysical directions, while still trying to remain within the critical perspective of Kant – the thing in itself for Fichte became the non-I, and an object of knowledge, while Schelling developed a philosophy of nature in addition to transcendental philosophy, where for instance mechanism was not the leading principle.

While praising Kant throughout the latter parts of *WdL*, Hegel is just as much an heir to Fichte and Schelling. Already in Hegel's early writings we find that which later will come to a full expression in his philosophical system, and these are the matters concerning unity, difference or negativity in general, and reconciliation. In a sense Hegel's whole philosophical enterprise can be seen as a contemplation on such matters. They remain at the heart of everything, seemingly without exception, and sometimes one can get the sense that Hegel is not as much concerned with the subject he is treating for the moment, be it art, religion or history, but rather with how he can use these subjects in gaining insights into the real unity of all that is. For example it is stated that philosophy of history really is about *theodicaea*, a justification of God in history, meaning for Hegel a demonstration of how history really is the story of *Geist* reconciling with history, and thus reuniting with itself. However, one should not be led astray by considerations like these, for it is also a main concern for Hegel that what is outside of *Geist* also stands in an essential relation to its identity; stating what is true requires that one enters fully into this relationship and resists the temptation of grasping the unity of everything abstractly, or to treat it as accessed merely in a form of intuition available to a select few.

A foreshadow of the main themes of Hegel's thought can be seen in his early work *Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal*, where Hegel associates unity, loss, restoration with the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. A similar way of conceiving things are expressed in formulations like: "Das Absolute selbst aber ist darum die Identität der Identität und der Nichtidentität; entgegensetzen und Einssein ist zugleich in ihm"<sup>1</sup>, and "die Verbindung der Verbindung und der Nichtverbindung."<sup>2</sup> This principle can be formulated as *identity within difference*, as opposed to the *Hen Kai Pan* of the romantics; the former implying that identity or true reality is to be found in the inner relationship between opposites, while the latter tends to become an abstract monism. Since difference is seen as just as essential as unity, Hegel wants to transcend metaphysics in the sense of contingent reflections on something given

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<sup>1</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Vergleichung des Schellingschen Prinzips der Philosophie mit dem Fichteschen*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, 2/94

<sup>2</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Systemfragment von 1800*, G.W.F. Hegel., Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, 1/422

above, behind or beyond, and show how the principle of identity within difference is actual in the whole of reality, that is, *including externality and manifestation*.

Hegel only published two fully fledged books in his lifetime; *Phänomenologie des Geistes* and *Wissenschaft der Logik*. Of these the former has by far been the most discussed and commented upon, and apparently the most influential when it comes to the different readings of Hegel. *WdL* on the other hand has remained obscure; there hardly exist any comprehensive commentaries, and discussions seem focused on certain elements of it. Still Hegel himself regards it as the speculative core of the system, referring to it when further justifications are needed for essential elements that for instance *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* rely on.<sup>3</sup> It should be easy to see that a reading of Hegel focusing on for instance *PhG* and *PdR* would be very different than a reading that sees *WdL* in relation to the lectures on the philosophy of religion. My claim here will be that no reading and serious assessment can be made of Hegel's philosophy without coming to grips with *WdL*; this applies especially to criticism. For instance one might claim that an analysis of society based upon *PdR* would represent a deeply wrongheaded way of analysing *modern* society, and I do not believe Hegel would have any problems with admitting to this. Actually there are interpretations of modern society given in light of the concepts developed in *WdL*, which are very different to Hegel's analysis in *PdR*,<sup>4</sup> but still in an important sense "Hegelian," since it is based upon the conceptual analysis of *WdL*. Examples like these go against that there are totalitarian tendencies within the core of Hegel's system; there is no "final synthesis" in which everything reaches completion once and for all – although such a denial of a final synthesis is itself a sort of negative completion, in that *for everything* it is such that it will not reach completion, a completion of this kind might be the only one that is acceptable.

Further, in the lectures on the philosophy of history a direct connection to the *Logic* is stated. One of the results of the *Logic*, that every step of the process of the world history has a determinate and peculiar principle,<sup>5</sup> is essential to Hegel's understanding of history, while the conceptual relations between freedom and necessity used within these lectures is analyzed in the *Logic*,<sup>6</sup> where questions regarding the strictly conceptual aspects of freedom and necessity can be answered to a greater extent. Later we will see that the method which is developed in

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<sup>3</sup> See G.W.F.Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, 7/12 and 7/30 §2. The concept of right is developed in *EG* §§485-487, and *EG* is a development of *EL* which *WdL* again is a more comprehensive expression of.

<sup>4</sup> T. Nicolacopoulos, G. Vassilacopoulos, *The Logical Structure of Love*, Aldershot 1999

<sup>5</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 12/86

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12/41

the *Logic* is used in relation to *PhG*, and in the third part of *Enz.*, *Die Philosophie des Geistes*, Hegel states that mind, or spirit, is to be comprehended in the light of the concepts developed in the *Logic*, especially that of the Idea.<sup>7</sup> Therefore it seems fair to claim that the *Logic* has an essential place within Hegel's philosophy, especially in the sense that when further and final reasons are to be given for the material that is presented in the other parts of his philosophy, one is directed to the *Logic*. An important question in relation to the significance of Hegel's *Logic*, is how far the method developed in it can be used outside of it, or outside of Hegel's philosophy in general. Is the method neutral, in the sense that it can be used on any material while the method remains indifferent to the content of the material? What actually is the sense of "method" for Hegel? What does it mean to subject something to Hegel's "method"?

At first sight my reading will have much in common with the non-metaphysical readings of Hegel's philosophy; more specifically as a category theory, as originated by Klaus Hartmann, and developed as lying close to transcendental idealism in Robert Pippin's *Hegel's Idealism*. I do not however reject a metaphysical reading outright – it is more a matter of that I believe that Hegel usually represents a genuine *third* when it comes to such oppositions that seem common within modern philosophy, for instance the oppositions like the ones between foundationalism and anti-foundationalism, essentialism and anti-essentialism, metaphysics and anti-metaphysics, freedom and determinism, and hence it will be important for me to develop an understanding of the mode of thinking which can grasp this *third*, namely speculation, and an understanding of the third *conceptually* will be in focus. This will be an indication only, but one can think of speculation as a way of thinking that is to recognize that discussions of the kind mentioned above are grounded more in the nature of the matter itself than in that someone has grasped the truth and others have not, and I will regard this as lying at the core of Hegel's system, i.e. the speculation where oppositions are resolved and shown to be abstractions.

In my interpretation of the *Logic* I have relied mainly on John Burbidge's *On Hegel's Logic* and Errol E. Harris *An Interpretation of Hegel's Logic*. Burbidge has presented four interpretative theses on Hegel<sup>8</sup>:

1. There is a significant difference between Hegel's logic and his philosophy of the real world. The former is developed within thought alone and rests on itself, while the latter must be radically open to change.

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<sup>7</sup> W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 10/14

<sup>8</sup> John W. Burbidge, *Hegel on Logic and Religion*, State University Press of New York 1992, p. 6

2. Hegel's Idea is not a simple feature of conceptual thought, but the integration of thought and actuality in a manner which takes equally into account the difference between the two, as well as the similarity.
3. Hegel's philosophy is not closed, but in order to be consistent it must be open to novelty, in such a manner that incorporation of what is new must equally destroy it as elaborate and complete it.
4. While the method of Hegel's Logic might be absolute, the details might turn out not to be so, in light of new differences and determinations that emerge in reality.

These thesis could seem to represent a reading of Hegel that states that only a negative completion is possible, i.e. that the system will never be complete, at which point a similar paradox or contradiction to the one previously encountered in relation to the "final synthesis" earlier arises; this statement that the system will never be complete is the one statement that will apply universally to it, which implies that the system is complete in that it is necessary that the system is not possible to complete. This can be seen as a problem which really is illusory, in that the system may be internally complete, while a statement *about* it as a whole marks its limits externally, and so is not in contradiction with the material that properly belongs to the system. This can be the case with most kinds of systems, but the *Logic* is a kind of system that is to incorporate the conceptual relations that we use in *every* other context, which means that there in theory is no way to put oneself in an external relation to it – entering into a conceptual treatment of the *Logic* means that one already within its sphere; making conceptual points about concepts is doing logic as it is done in Hegel's Logic. On the other hand, in that the *Logic* is to contain the concepts that are used in forming judgements about internality and externality in general, a problem of completion that is intended to be an external point is nonetheless also at least potentially an internal problem. I will leave this problem unresolved here, but as it stands, negativity or aporia inevitability arises when one tries to formulate universal truths that claim anything about reality as it is in itself, as it is done in the *Logic*. When a universal truth is stated positively, experience usually turns out to contradict it, particular cases can easily be brought out against it, or the reason for it being determined as a universal can be shown to be contingent, and when formulated negatively, the contradictions arise within thought itself. I hope to shed light on this issue in the course of my treatment here of Hegel's Logic.

Since the *Logic* is so central to Hegel's system, I believe that as far as the *Logic* remains problematic, so too does the rest of Hegel's philosophy, especially the later systematic one.



Insofar as particular elements of the system rely on the *Logic*, when it comes to the rational core of these elements, a critique of the *Logic* can itself undermine the rationality of the rest of the elements of the system, for instance the so-called dialectics of master and slave. The *Logic* is to be understood as the all-animating spirit of the sciences, and its categories the hierarchy of pure spirits,<sup>9</sup> so discarding it would mean that a rather spirit-less material would remain, something far away from one of the main themes of Hegel's philosophy.

Chapter one will mainly treat the issues from *Differenz.*, focusing mainly on Fichte, intellectual intuition and the development of the concept of speculation. Chapter two will be a clarification of the relation between the *Logic* and *PhG* and the question concerning how science<sup>10</sup> must begin, while in chapter three the main tasks and significance of the *Logic* will be treated in general. Chapter four will be a treatment of the different "modes of thought" that are central to the *Logic*, and I will claim that something similar to Fichte's intellectual intuition must be involved in Hegelian speculation, in particular in relation to the *Aufhebung*. In chapter five I will try to develop an understanding of the three main kinds of "logics" that are developed within Hegel's *Logic*, the logic of being, the logic of essence and the logic of the concept, all of which are fundamentally different ways of understanding conceptual relations and the relation between thought and being, but all of which are also essential to a full understanding of what is real. An important claim in this chapter is that the *Aufhebung* can be understood as a kind of transcendental argument, which further answers questions regarding necessity and strict argument in relation to Hegel's system. This chapter also serves the function of answering Hegel's claim that in the *Logic* form and matter are not separate, which means that in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the task of the *Logic* and its method, entering into the matter of the *Logic* itself is required. Considering the size of the *Logic* it will naturally only be possible to give certain examples of the conceptual developments contained within the *Logic*, but hopefully these examples will be sufficient to indicate the nature of the different kinds of logics while showing their essential place within the whole. In chapter six I will return to the issue of openness and closure of the system that was posed as a problem in this introduction and try to come to terms with Hegel's claims about the necessity of the system, and in particular the absoluteness of the method.

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<sup>9</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/85

<sup>10</sup> "Science" is here to be understood as what Hegel means with "Wissenschaft," i.e. it is not referred to the natural sciences, nor the social sciences, nor the humanities etc., but to science in a more general sense.

## I. HEGEL'S RELATION TO FICHTE AND SCHELLING: TOWARDS A SPECULATIVE SCIENCE

As we saw in the introduction, the *Logic* is the speculative core of the system. That a system is to have a core should be easy enough to get a rough understanding of, but what is meant by “speculative”? In order to get an understanding of the word “speculation” that reflects the way Hegel uses it, one can start by trying to conceive it as the opposite of what is usually meant; it is not “blind” thinking, conjecture or guessing. “Speculation” comes from the latin word “speculatio” (‘spying out, reconnoitering; contemplation’) and “speculari” (‘to spy, observe; to look around’), which descends from “specere” (‘to see, look’).<sup>11</sup> Except for “contemplation” all its meanings have something to do with an act of seeing something, and in a distinct sense speculative thought is to resemble seeing; it is thinking as seeing. Although this might sound outright absurd, what is meant is only that speculative thought is to receive its determination from the object itself, which is similar to how perception works, as contrary to imagination, which has more in common with what is usually conceived as thinking; it is something that first and foremost has its ground in the *subject* – it is the subject that ultimately determines the content of a thought, and hence thought is subjective. On the other hand, the attitude that thought should be determined only by the object – the ideal of truth as objectivity excluding what I *want* or *wish* to be true – is the attitude to truth that Hegel begins with in *PhG*.<sup>12</sup> But this is not the same as the absolute knowing that *PhG* ends with, which, as we shall see, is where *WdL* and speculation proper begins. So speculation does not consist in only this that thought is to be utterly determined by its object; it is not the *opposite* of the position to thought that says that thought is something ultimately subjective. Considering that the eye is an organ that does not leave any impression as it is, speculation also has an element of transforming its object; it is thought as something more than a passive medium for our human ability to make abstractions; it is something that actively sets itself in relation to its object and transforms it, much the same way as the eye is related to its objects – in this sense it involves reflection, which we will turn to later. What is important here is to conceive speculation as something neither exclusively subjective nor objective.

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd 1992, p. 271

<sup>12</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, 3/82: ” Das Wissen, welches zuerst oder unmittelbar unser Gegenstand ist, kann kein anderes sein als dasjenige, welches selbst unmittelbares Wissen, Wissen des Unmittelbaren oder Seienden ist. Wir haben uns ebenso *unmittelbar* oder *aufnehmend* zu verhalten, also nichts an ihm, wie es sich darbietet, zu verändern und von dem Auffassen das Begreifen abzuhalten.”

## Intellectual Intuition

The understanding of speculation developed above can be seen to be identical to Kant's intellectual intuition, understood as direct, intellectual knowledge of things in themselves rather than as appearances in space and time.<sup>13</sup> Kant rejects that this is actually possible for human beings. Fichte however, claiming that his system never has been anything but Kantian – differing in exposition but not in content<sup>14</sup> –, holds that intellectual intuition is possible:

“Dieses dem Philosophen angemuthete Anschauen seiner selbst im Vollziehn des Actes, wodurch ihm das Ich entsteht, nenne ich *intellectuelle Anschauung*. Sie ist das unmittelbare Bewusstseyn, dass ich handle, und was ich handle: sie ist das, wodurch ich etwas weiss, weil ich es thue. Dass es ein solches Vermögen der intellectuellen Anschauung gebe, lässt sich nicht durch Begriffe demonstrieren, noch, was es sey, aus Begriffen entwickeln. Jeder muss unmittelbar in sich selbst finden, oder er wird es nie kennen lernen.”<sup>15</sup>

Nonetheless, Fichte also claims that this intellectual intuition is the only firm standpoint for all philosophy,<sup>16</sup> which means, considering the above quotation, that anyone who has not discovered intellectual intuition in himself and still has a philosophy, can only have one that is not firmly grounded, i.e. one that belongs to those that Fichte calls the dogmatists. According to Fichte, there are only two possible philosophical systems: the dogmatic and the idealist. In experience, the thing and the thought, or object and subject, are bound together inseparably – the naïve, unreflected or uncritical consciousness does not ask questions about the relation of its thoughts to its objects, there are no abstractions, no thoughts considered on their own. Any determination of consciousness is immediately grounded in what consciousness has before itself as a given, and any split between subject and object, or that which is conscious and that which the consciousness is about, is not real; perceiver and perceived, knower and known, are not experienced in isolation, but exist as two extremes of the one and same relation, which as a whole is what is immediately present. The philosopher on the other hand removes the one or the other in thought in order to discover which of the two is the ultimate ground of the experience; in order to find that which explains why and how there is any experience at all.

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<sup>13</sup> I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Felix Meiner Verlag 1971, pp.302-304 (B 307-B308)

<sup>14</sup> J.G. Fichte *Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, Band 1; Fichtes Werke herausgegeben von Immanuel Hermann Fichte; Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1971, p. 421

<sup>15</sup> J.G. Fichte, *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, Band 1; Fichtes Werke herausgegeben von Immanuel Hermann Fichte, Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1971, p. 463

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466

Removing the subject, one is left with a thing in itself as the ground; this is the dogmatic position, which has as its basic understanding of reality that everything ultimately derives from some thing, some objective matter in the world independent of human cognition, which is used in any ultimate explanation of anything – in this case, any experience, which was the starting point of the consideration of the real. This is the dogmatic position.

Removing the object or the thing in experience, or focusing on consciousness itself abstracted from what consciousness has as its object, one is left with the knowing subject or intelligence, as the ground of reality. This is the idealist position.

There is no middle ground for Fichte; anyone thinking these matters through in a consistent manner will see that these are the only two possible systems, and that any attempt at fusing these systems will result in inconsistency. At the same time, none of these systems can refute the other directly; according to which principle one takes to be the first, the other is refuted – this is true for both systems.<sup>17</sup> Fichte also claims that what sort of philosophy one chooses depends on what sort of man one is, and seems to go about an argument *ad hominem* on those choosing otherwise than the idealist system; “Ein von Natur schlafender oder durch Geistesknechtschaft, gelehrten Luxus und Eitelkeit erschlaffender und gekrümmter Charakter wird sich nie zum Idealismus erheben.”<sup>18</sup> He also claims that the dogmatic system is incoherent, attacking for instance the idea of the thing in itself; it is only an invention, i.e. it really has its ground in the thinking subject itself,<sup>19</sup> and further the dogmatic system’s inability to explain what it must, demonstrates its untenability.<sup>20</sup> However, Fichte does not believe anyone supporting a dogmatic system can be convinced to change his position by rational argument, and any attempt to “convert” the dogmatic in a polemical manner will be futile. I believe that on a deeper level this is due to that Fichte really sees the ground of what system one chooses to be dependant on the individual’s freedom; an experience of this freedom is needed if one is to understand the nature of the I that is the ground for the idealist system, and an experience of freedom cannot be forced upon anyone either by argument or polemic. The experience of the I is what comes about through intellectual intuition for Fichte, and Fichte tries to give everyone an opportunity to experience this in the *Wissenschaftslehre* and the works elaborating it,<sup>21</sup> and further to show how a system is developed out of the insight that the I and

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<sup>17</sup> J.G. Fichte, *Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, Band 1; Fichtes Werke herausgegeben von Immanuel Hermann Fichte; Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1971 p. 429

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 434

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 429

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 435

<sup>21</sup> I.e. the different introductions

the action that returns into itself are the very same concepts.<sup>22</sup> The I is that which creates itself, or always already has created itself – this is the absolute ego that is discovered by the single human being through intellectual intuition. It can be seen that this concept of the I is very much alike Kant's transcendental unity of apperception, but Fichte's exposition of it is unique to him. I will try to reconstruct his argument in what follows, based on Fichte's lectures held in 1798/99 titled: *Wissenschaftslehre Nova Methodo*,<sup>23</sup> where one through intellectual intuition comes to see the nature of the I as grounded in itself. This is naturally no strict argument for Fichte, in the sense that it will necessarily convince any rational human being as long as it is understood; what it depends on is that one through ones own thinking both actively and freely comes to realize oneself as an absolutely independant I.

1. You can undoubtedly think: I. In doing this your inner consciousness is determined in a certain sense. You only think what you yourself think this I to be – this can be anything.
2. Instead of thinking what you actually thought, you could have thought anything else, for instance a concrete sensory object, like a table. You can freely think this, or your I. In passing from the one to the other, you will notice that your thinking is free, and that you yourself act when doing so. Your thinking is an act, a determinate act; one that could have been otherwise – it would have been if you had acted otherwise.
3. Think again: I. When you thought of the table or a similar object, what you thought of was different from yourself – but when you think yourself, you are not only what is thought of, but also that which is thinking. What thinks and what is thought is then actually one; the act of determining oneself as oneself immediately returns back to itself. I am determined completely by myself, since there is no other content to the determination other than that that which determines is the same as the determined. The concept or the thinking of the I consists in the I's acting upon itself, and such an acting upon oneself gives a thought of the I and not something else. The I is that which determines itself, and that which determines itself is the I.

Fichte identifies a possible objection to the I considered through intellectual intuition; in order to *think* myself, I must first *be*. Fichte will then ask the one making the objection: who is it that now makes this claim that he had to be before he thought of himself? This existence that had to

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<sup>22</sup> J.G. Fichte, *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, Band 1; Fichtes Werke herausgegeben von Immanuel Hermann Fichte; Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1971, p. 463

<sup>23</sup> J.G. Fichte, *Forsøk på en ny fremstilling av Vitenskapslæren*, (trans. Eivind Storheim) Solum Forlag 1990, p. 101 – A lecture written down by Karl Christian Friedrich Krause

be before the thought of oneself *is only known as far as it is thought*, and this existence of the I is not anything more than the I positing its existence of itself. Fichte does not allow that the thought of the I and the existence of the same are different. We can see that Fichtes conception of the I closely resembles the definition of God that states that God's essence is the same as his existence. The essence of something in this context is that which determines the nature of something; if I have stated the essence of something I have stated the whole of its being in such a way that I could not negate it without speaking of a completely different thing, or nothing at all. Essence is in this way different from appearance or accidents, which are aspects of the thing that can change without the thing ceasing to be what it is.

However, Fichte admits that one has to presuppose a previous positing of the I of itself, before the current positing is brought to attention, and that this previous positing must have come about without a clear consciousness, which the current positing is related to and dependant upon.

Fichte gives a second line of argument, similar to the former, but nonetheless it will be enlightening to consider it, especially in comparison with to Hegel later will treat as absolute knowing. The argument runs as follows:

1. Think about the wall in front of you; this is something that you do. Self-consciousness is potentially present in any act, since what is done is done by someone.
2. Lead your attention to the self that thinks about the wall; think about the thinker – *you* are conscious about *yourself*. You must necessarily differentiate between the thinking I and the I that is thought of.
3. Doing this, there must be a higher subject thinking this differentiation as its object. This movement goes on ad infinitum; a higher subject is reproduced once it is made an object for thinking. One would never get to the real ground of consciousness, since when you are aware of yourself as the being being aware, another awareness is posited, which again is to be the object of the awareness. The subject that is to be the object of awareness, is eternally reproduced outside of this relation; consciousness is impossible to grasp.
4. We actually have self-consciousness, and accordingly the last statement of (3) is wrong. Its being wrong means that its opposite is true, and the opposite is the following: there is a consciousness where subject and object are inseparable and absolutely one and the same.

The conclusion is that every possible consciousness as an object for a subject presupposes an immediate consciousness where subject and object are one; without this presupposition consciousness would be unconceivable.

Fichte builds his philosophical system or the *Wissenschaftslehre* on this insight. Going through the whole deduction as Fichte presented it will take us too far away from the issue, and so we will limit ourselves to general considerations relevant to seeing how Hegel builds on Fichtean insights in his Logic.

Hegel in general gives recognition to this speculative part of Fichtes philosophy, although he also makes a critique of it, since the I that is presented there is only the concept of the I; it is not possible to individuate this absolute I – we only have what is common to everyone. Fichtes philosophy is for Hegel the development of the form in itself (the synthesis of concept and actuality),<sup>24</sup> but in a onesided manner. The system is produced out of the immediate certainty of oneself, but it is forgotten that this certainty was produced by the reflection upon oneself, which equally presupposed an objective side to reality which according to Hegel is lost out of sight or never really reached, while it is equally essential for any system that is to be comprehensive. The absolute ego, or  $I = I$ , would remain an indifferent unity, if it were not the non-I, which makes it possible for the I to receive a determination other than pure indeterminateness. Fichte's philosophy for Hegel turns out to be an infinite appropriation of the objective side of reality; one that can never be completed, since that itself would undermine the determination of subject as subject in opposition to an object – consciousness would not be possible. The insight this builds on is that the subject cannot realize itself, or even begin to determine itself as what it is without being in relation to something objective; destroying the object would mean destroying the ground of itself, while the realization of itself is dependant on an appropriation, or relative destruction, of the object. Fichte's philosophy thus consists in a contradiction that is reproduced forever: the I can only be grasped as it is in itself ideally, while it cannot become fully real, since its grasping itself ideally only happens on the condition of a real, empirical I. The ideality of the I is conditioned by reality – and the ideality becoming real, means destroying this reality that it is absolutely dependant on. The ego remains forever dependant on the non-ego, in order to be intelligence.<sup>25</sup> Fichte himself recognizes this, but he

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<sup>24</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, 20/388

<sup>25</sup> J.G. Fichte, *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, Band 1; Fichtes Werke herausgegeben von Immanuel Hermann Fichte; Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1971, p. 248

does not see it as problematic in the same way as Hegel does.<sup>26</sup> Hegel makes a critique of this in saying that Fichte *really cannot reach beyond a thing in itself*,<sup>27</sup> which makes Fichte's philosophy seem highly inconsistent if one brings to mind how Fichte treated the dogmatics and their dependence on a thing in itself.

In *System des Transcendentalen Idealismus* (1800) Schelling represents a sort of middle ground here in that he admits that there are two possible systems, but that both must exist alongside one another, and be contained in a comprehensive philosophy of the whole of reality. The one system explains how intelligence arises from matter, or how the subject emerges out of objective relations in the world; the other is the opposite, namely an explanation of how matter arises from the intelligence, or how the objective side of reality is produced out of the subjective. These two systems remain on each side of one another on their own. However, Schelling claims that there is a possible unity to these sides of reality in the aesthetic experience, which then will be an experienced identity of the subject and object – unity is not possible elsewhere than in the experience of beauty. This aesthetic experience is then similar to the intellectual intuition in Fichte. But intellectual intuition remains something subjective for Schelling; actually he thinks of it as the utterly non-objective. He asks:

“Wenn es denn nun aber doch eine solche Anschauung, welche das absolut Identische, an sich weder Sub- noch Objektive zum Objekt hat, und wenn man sich wegen dieser Anschauung, welche nur eine intellektuelle sein kann, auf die unmittelbare Erfahrung beriefe, wodurch kann denn nun auch diese Anschauung wieder objektiv, d.h. wie kann ausser Zweifel gefasst werden, dass sie nicht auf einer bloss subjektiven Täuschung beruhe, wenn es nicht eine allgemeine und von allen Menschen anerkannte Objektivität jener Anschauung gibt?”<sup>28</sup>

The answer is that intellectual intuition is established objectively in art; aesthetic experience is nothing more than intellectual intuition having become objective. As we will see further on, for Hegel it is more so that this unity comprehended in intellectual intuition is properly understood to lie in its full extent within philosophy, and more specifically in the *Logic*. The problem of objectivity, that the absolute should be something accessible to all, will receive a different treatment by Hegel, although art will remain essential as the objective representation of the truth, in the sense of something that is immediately accessible to everyone as something intuited.

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<sup>26</sup> J.G. Fichte, *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, Band 1; Fichtes Werke herausgegeben von Immanuel Hermann Fichte; Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1971, pp. 509-511

<sup>27</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 20/404

<sup>28</sup> F.W.J Schelling, *System des Transcendentalen Idealismus*, Ausgewählte Schriften; Suhrkamp 1995, p. 1/693



Schelling's system is speculative, given that it begins from the point of indifference where consciousness posits its other in order to achieve self-consciousness; the point of indifference being the identity of subject and object. This gives rise to the two systems, as mentioned above, each side beginning with either the subject or the object and ending with its opposite. At a first glance Schelling's system differs most markedly from Fichte's in that it contains a philosophy of nature. This part of the system is to be the objective side of the subject-object identity, and will give finite being and appearance its due part in the system; absolute knowing cannot be without this, rather it is the identity of being and appearance – the latter being a mirror of the former. Schelling's system is to develop the objective side or non-ego side in Fichte's language, of the indifference point, so as to make this unity possible. Difference in general, what is other to the unity, is to be given its due, since it is recognized that without this the absolute cannot be what it is; it becomes what it ought to be only through a development of both sides of the subject-object identity so that each one mirrors the other.

A central part of the theory of identity between the subject and object is that explanation by reference to causal chains does not explain anything in a manner that is ultimately satisfactory, since a further cause can always be asked for. Any explanation must be led back to something that is the cause of itself, and this is the self, or the absolute ego. Knowledge is of the same structure as that of self-knowledge, but without any ultimate split between reality as appearance and reality as it is in itself. Reality as it is in itself is to coincide with the structure of self-knowledge. For Schelling neither the human being or nature is finished as it is; by *knowing* ourselves we come to *be* what we are; through the knowledge of nature, we bring to consciousness what existed there unconsciously. In this return to itself, we reach the indifference point again as realized; its opposite taken as part of it – but again, this is objectively present only in art.

## **Reflection**

In addition to intellectual intuition, reflection is a mode of thinking Hegel treats in his discussion of the relation between Fichte and Schelling in *Differenz*. Reflection is the mental activity of thinking that goes on before one comes to the moment of intellectual intuition; one continually moves from the subject as the object of thinking back to the subject that is doing the thinking, which hence always seems to escape being taken as it is in itself. The conclusion that is reached by thinking that cannot get out of the reflective movements is that its objects are

unknowable as they are in themselves, which we saw an example of in the case in relation to the second argument of Fichte where consciousness as it is in itself proves to be impossible to understand. For Hegel reflection will later become a part of the *Logic*, in that it represents an essential aspect of thought; the reflective movements are not simply to be abandoned – only their results are not to be taken to be final. Hegel does not limit himself to insights of the kind that intellectual intuition gives; the movements of reflection are reproduced in reality, and that consciousness turns out to be impossible to understand, potentially reveals something important about its nature; a potential that would not be possible to make actual without the movements of reflection. A strong distinction between reflection and speculation is inauthentic to speculation, as far as by “strong” is meant something that is insurpassable. On the other hand it is impossible to enter into reflection from the standpoint of speculation, without turning the speculative content into something that is reflected upon and then as a matter of discussion in which the object is initially possible to determine in one way or the other and not both at once. In this sense reflections are limited. From the speculative standpoint it could seem that one only could remain silent in relation to reflection, since in reflection it is presupposed a split between the subject and object, a split of the kind which is seen to be overcome in for instance the intellectual intuition of the I. Here we can see the idea of immanent critique arise; in order for speculation to remain within what is rational, and not be a mystical transcendent position, one needs to pass through reflection in order to come to speculative insight. In philosophical reflection we bring to our awareness what we usually do unconsciously in everyday thinking and acting in the world. We make this our own ordinary activity into an object of reflection; but in this we posit a split between the subject and object that at least at first is a unity, and in reflection we are cast from the one side of the matter to the other, and from a critical perspective this leads to an aporia, again like the one we encountered in Fichte’s argument, where consciousness turns out to be impossible to conceive of as it is in itself, while it to also seems to be something that immediately is quite easy to understand.

Fichte understands absolute freedom on the one hand as the I, but it is an I that is necessarily conditioned by a non-ego; in the practical sphere for instance it is drive. This absolute freedom will always stand in opposition to itself through what it is. Its nature as self-positing will require the non-ego, but this non-ego comes from the outside, as an *Anstoss*; there remains an abyss between freedom and necessity – the absolute freedom is one that is necessarily conditioned. Reflection cannot overcome this abyss, and in practical life, the world can only converge into what it ought to be. But from this abyss arises speculation.

In a sense reflection can be seen as a presupposition for speculation, and is not be looked down upon, rather it will be an essential part of Hegel's Logic, being the starting point of Book II, or the *Wesenslogik*. Hegel makes a statement on this in *PhG*, where non-speculative thinking is said to have its validity, although non-speculative thinking, including reflection, should not be mixed with speculative thought. Philosophy will not be able to remain open for speculative insights when the usual way that non-speculative thought treats elements in a sentence is upheld:

“In der Tat hat auch das nicht spekulative Denken sein Recht, das gültig, aber in der Weise des spekulativen Satzes nicht beachtet ist. Daß die Form des Satzes aufgehoben wird, muß nicht nur auf *unmittelbare* Weise geschehen, nicht durch den bloßen Inhalt des Satzes. Sondern diese entgegengesetzte Bewegung muß ausgesprochen werden; sie muß nicht nur jene innerliche Hemmung, sondern dies Zurückgehen des Begriffs in sich muß *dargestellt* sein. Diese Bewegung, welche das ausmacht, was sonst der Beweis leisten sollte, ist die dialektische Bewegung des Satzes selbst. Sie allein ist das *wirkliche* Spekulative, und nur das Aussprechen derselben ist spekulative Darstellung. Als Satz ist das Spekulative nur die *innerliche* Hemmung und die nicht *daseiende* Rückkehr des Wesens in sich. Wir sehen uns daher oft von philosophischen Expositionen an dieses *innere* Anschauen verwiesen und dadurch die Darstellung der dialektischen Bewegung des Satzes erspart, die wir verlangten. - Der *Satz* soll ausdrücken, *was* das Wahre ist, aber wesentlich ist es Subjekt; als dieses ist es nur die dialektische Bewegung, dieser sich selbst erzeugende, fortleitende und in sich zurückgehende Gang. - Bei dem sonstigen Erkennen macht der Beweis diese Seite der ausgesprochenen Innerlichkeit aus.”<sup>29</sup>

How dialectics are related to philosophical proof will become clearer in the following chapters. For now we will take a closer look on the musings about the *speculative sentence*. For Hegel the relationship between what is true and what is false is not of the kind where they are standing each on their own independantly, as it is conceived when for any given proposition it either states something true about the world or something false, and there is no possible third value to truth. The thought of truth and falsity as values, with a possible third value and so on, must be abandoned. But it will be far too simplistic to say that there is something false about something true, for instance as when one says of some truth that it is limited since it is said from a certain perspective, within a certain context etc. Moreover the false is not to be conceived as a part or as a moment of the truth. When what is other to the truth is taken up into the truth, it must be expressed or understood otherwise than is usual in order not to make any simple self-defeating statement. The same point applies to expressions like “in speculation subject and object are identical”:

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<sup>29</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/61

“So wie der Ausdruck der *Einheit* des Subjekts und Objekts, des Endlichen und Unendlichen, des Seins und Denkens usf. das Ungeschickte hat, daß Objekt und Subjekt usf. das bedeuten, was *sie außer ihrer Einheit* sind, in der Einheit also nicht als das gemeint sind, was ihr Ausdruck sagt, ebenso ist das Falsche nicht mehr als Falsches ein Moment der Wahrheit.”<sup>30</sup>

When expressing something as the unity of subject and object, those terms lose their original meaning. In order to express something true in such statements their difference needs to be stressed *as much as* their unity – even this way of expressing it has something very external to it, as if it were a matter of *degree* that unity and difference should coincide. It would be more appropriate to say that the difference and unity must be developed out of the terms themselves; showing how each taken on its own is an abstraction. This is where dialectics later will come in, as well as the *Aufhebung*, about which I will have much more to say later. For now what is important to observe is that any statement *about* speculative truths will have the mark of reflection, and really represent some onesidedness or abstract aspect of the truth. The limits to such reflections should be recognized, but when such a recognition is given it will be easier to see how the truth is also present in abstractions.

Certain statements of Hegel taken in isolation can be used as evidence of him holding a correspondence theory of truth, and there are examples of this interpretation of him. There is especially one passage in §213 of *Enz.* that is quoted in such cases, where Hegel states that truth in the deeper sense means that objectivity is identical with the concept. If we look at the whole passage another picture soon emerges, and Hegel can hardly be seen to endorse a correspondence theory of truth understood in any ordinary sense:

Unter Wahrheit versteht man zunächst, daß ich *wisse*, wie etwas *ist*. Dies ist jedoch die Wahrheit nur in Beziehung auf das Bewußtsein oder die formelle Wahrheit, die bloße Richtigkeit. Dahingegen besteht die Wahrheit im tieferen Sinn darin, daß die Objektivität mit dem Begriff identisch ist. Dieser tiefere Sinn der Wahrheit ist es, um den es sich handelt, wenn z. B. von einem *wahren* Staat oder von einem *wahren* Kunstwerk die Rede ist. Diese Gegenstände sind *wahr*, wenn sie das sind, was sie sein *sollen*, d. h. wenn ihre Realität ihrem Begriff entspricht. So aufgefaßt ist das Unwahre dasselbe, was sonst auch das Schlechte genannt wird. Ein schlechter Mensch ist ein unwahrer Mensch, d. h. ein Mensch, der sich seinem Begriff oder seiner Bestimmung nicht gemäß verhält. Ganz ohne Identität des Begriffs und der Realität vermag indes nichts zu bestehen. Auch das Schlechte und Unwahre *ist* nur, insofern dessen Realität noch irgendwie sich seinem Begriff gemäß verhält. Das durchaus Schlechte oder Begriffswidrige ist eben damit ein in sich selbst Zerfallendes. Der Begriff allein ist es, wodurch die Dinge in der Welt ihren Bestand haben, d. h. in der Sprache der religiösen Vorstellung: die Dinge sind das, was sie sind, nur durch den ihnen inwohnenden göttlichen und damit schöpferischen Gedanken.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/41

<sup>31</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/41

Robert Stern has noticed that this conception of truth is close to what Heidegger calls *material truth*, as opposed to *propositional truth*.<sup>32</sup> Something is materially true when the thing itself accords with its essence; being falls together with essence. How the thing in question appears to be is nothing other than what it is in itself, and if it is fully true, if the accordance is consummate, there are no contingent aspects to it, which again implies that one could not remove or change anything without the thing also ceasing to be what it is. A propositional truth regards the status of a proposition or statement in relation to what this proposition or statement is about. For Hegel the truth of propositional statements can only be a matter of correctness; while truth is to be conceived of as something quite different. Material truth is more or less lost out of sight today, but its echo can be heard in statements of the kind “he was a true friend”, and “this is a true work of art,” however rare such expressions are. Hegel contrasts truth (*Wahrheit*) to correctness (*Richtigkeit*),<sup>33</sup> where correctness is mere formal agreement of a representation to its content, while truth is the agreement of the object with itself or its concept. In ordinary life, Hegel remarks in the *Zusätze* of §172 of *Enz.*, truth and correctness are treated as synonymous, but while it certainly may be correct that someone is ill, or has stolen something, this is a content that is not *true* in the sense of material truth, since an ill body is not in agreement with the concept of a living body, since that implies a healthy body, and a theft is not an act that is in agreement with the concept of human action. A true living body is not an ill body, and true human action is not theft. One should keep in mind that these are *examples* of material truth, which rely on an application of the kind of logic developed by Hegel; the concept of a living body belongs to philosophy of nature, while the concept of action belongs to ethics or philosophy of right. This means that judgements of the kind given in these examples are not necessarily implied by the *Logic*, but relies on its concrete application, which means that other applications may be possible. What is important here is to notice that the theoretical foundations of such judgements are given in the *Logic*. Regarding propositional truth, it seems obvious that it would for Hegel be a matter of correctness. Formal values of truth can be reintroduced in relation to correctness. If a statement is true it is correct, and if it is false it is incorrect; truth and falsity are decided in relation to the content of the statement, which can be derived from for instance sense impressions. I believe that what is to count as deciding content is not so much an issue for Hegel – such issues could be treated internally within philosophy of language, but when it comes to deciding which theory as a whole is more

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Stern: “Did Hegel Hold an Identity Theory of Truth?” In: *Mind*, Vol. 102. 408., Oxford University Press 1993

<sup>33</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/323

true than others, this must rely on concepts of truth closer to material truth, which means that something like Hegel's logic must be presupposed.

Hegel states in *PhG* that everything depends on expressing the true not only as substance but equally as much as subject.<sup>34</sup> Any thinking being is a subject; most immediately this is true in thinking, as any thinker can move about in this universal landscape of thought through himself. This landscape is for Hegel expressed in its purity in the *Logic*, and since thought here thinks itself, the immediate unity of subject and object is possible, which is where *PhG* ends, where being is identical with thought in the thinking subject:

Das Sein ist absolut vermittelt; - es ist substantieller Inhalt, der ebenso unmittelbar Eigentum des Ichs, selbstisch oder der Begriff ist. Hiermit beschließt sich die Phänomenologie des Geistes. Was er in ihr sich bereitet, ist das Element des Wissens. In diesem breiten sich nun die Momente des Geistes in der *Form der Einfachheit* aus, die ihren Gegenstand als sich selbst weiß. Sie fallen nicht mehr in den Gegensatz des Seins und Wissens auseinander, sondern bleiben in der Einfachheit des Wissens, sind das Wahre in der Form des Wahren, und ihre Verschiedenheit ist nur Verschiedenheit des Inhalts. Ihre Bewegung, die sich in diesem Elemente zum Ganzen organisiert, ist die Logik oder *spekulative Philosophie*.<sup>35</sup>

There is something that is not satisfying about statements of the identity of subject or object, or thought and being – it is obviously not the case that when I think about a lion, there is one before me, so everywhere in a discussion such as this one the need to go into the matter itself is felt; one can really not grasp the nature of speculation or speculative identity by such external reflections. One could rely on each one on their own coming to a sort of insight like the one Fichte pointed to through intellectual intuitions, but this makes philosophy something available to only those who have intuitions of this kind. For Hegel then, as for Schelling, philosophy cannot be a universal science; *PhG* is, among other things, to be an education of the philosopher by immanent critique or negative experience in thought, such that absolute knowledge can be obtained; speculation is reached by taking the negative experience of reflection to its depths, and this movement is essential to speculation itself – it is not to stand aside from it, but to understand the reason behind it. Nonetheless I will return to the discussion which I set out with, and try to express the nature of speculation as far as one can within external reflection and end with a definition; one only needs to keep in mind that such a definition will necessarily be incomplete.

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<sup>34</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/23

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 3/39

In speculation the thinker is to be identical to what is thought; a subjective and objective moment is always contained, but when either of these are given too much importance, as representing the whole truth, a contradiction arises. In speculation someone does not *have* a thought anymore than a thought is thinking its thinker. In speculation therefore, when someone thinks that something is not, i.e. a contemplation of the nature of nothing as such, this someone really – for the moment – tries to reach this determination of *not being*. In thinking nothing, I would be nothing. In fact a reference to *what I would be* can be removed, since it is only the determination present in thought that matters. Thinking of it along the lines of a subject having an object before itself one has misrepresentation; one puts oneself outside of the universal sphere, and so moves out of the sphere of speculation.

Speculation is the comprehension of the unity of the subjective and objective side of reality as a unity that preserves their relative independence and interrelation, through their common ground or essence which is thought in its universality, making knowledge possible since this thought that is the essence of objects is also the essence of the thinker.

According to H. Harris the standpoint of the German idealists before Hegel towards speculation can be summed up as follows: “Schelling knows what speculative philosophy is, and sees how it has to be done in the light of Kant’s critical attack; Fichte knows what it must do, but not how to do it; Kant knows what it must do, and thinks he has proved the task impossible.”<sup>36</sup> Hegel’s mature philosophy goes on to treat reality as having three sides, in *Enz.* as logic, philosophy of nature, and philosophy of spirit, while Schelling remains in dispute with him on this, especially attacking the transition from logic to nature.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte’s and Schelling’s System of Philosophy*, State University of New York Press, 1977, p. 66

<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of this, see: “Challenge to Hegel: Contraries and Contradictories in Schelling’s Late Philosophy” In: John W. Burbidge, *Hegel on Logic and Religion*, State University Press of New York 1992

## II. PHÄNOMENOLOGIE DES GEISTES AND THE PATH TO ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE

As we have seen, Hegel will not accept that access to a speculative knowledge is only to be granted to a select few, since that would make it dependant upon something subjective, i.e. the particular nature of those having access to speculation. Unlike Fichte he does not believe that there are only two possible systems and that which system you choose will depend on what sort of person you are; there is no intellectual intuition which one must achieve in order to understand the idealist system. It is of course not as simple as that for Fichte either; he actually argues against the dogmatist position, not to mention the polemical attacks, but for Hegel how one is to bring about the truth is seen as a systematic issue, which can especially be seen when one keeps in mind how significant history is for Hegel. It is true that Hegel states the true is the whole; but that statement is immediately followed by an equally important claim, namely that the whole is only that which through its own development completes itself.<sup>38</sup> The development of the truth is as much part of the truth as the result of the development; the truth may once be achieved, but as soon as the development that has run up to this achievement is forgotten, the achievement becomes something else; an abstraction. Speculation becomes the absolute “point of view” which some claim they have access to, while objectively this is only a claim. Expressing it as a “point of view” of course confuses the matter; the absolute “point of view” is the view that takes everything into account, not seeing something from this or that place, but for instance seeing how the thought that one sees things from places comes about in the first place, and the actual reasons for why different views are limited in the way they are. Denying that there is no absolute “point of view” is inconsistent: for every possible view it is such that it cannot represent things universally, because each view is limited – this limitation holds universally, but excludes itself, which also should be given limited validity if it were to be a view that was consistent, but would then again deny its own claim. A consistent claim would be that universal truth at least is possible.

We are now moving into questions which in modern discussions have been treated as the questions of foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. Knowledge needs to be founded upon something that itself is in some sense necessarily true, or else any truth we hold will be contingent. Anti-foundationalists may deny that any such necessarily true foundations for knowledge are possible, but differ widely in a further elaboration of their view and what the status of knowledge then becomes.

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<sup>38</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/24



## The Foundationalist vs. Anti-Foundationalist Controversy

A usual foundationalist response to the charges of the anti-foundationalist is that the latter himself makes claims of an absolute nature – claims that express that there is a certain kind of knowledge that is unconditioned, knowledge which has no other foundation than itself and which cannot be doubted, and further that our understanding of knowledge in general should fundamentally be determined by this insight. This unconditioned knowledge or insight, is that there is no knowledge that is not conditioned, and so, says the foundationalist, the anti-foundationalist is making claims that in effect states that there is a certain kind of knowledge which itself is not founded, and so is inconsistent. William Maker locates the locus classicus when it comes to an anti-foundationalist response to this issue in what Wittgenstein says about that certain things cannot be said or spelled out, but nevertheless be shown.<sup>39</sup> The anti-foundationalist may respond to the foundationalist charge of inconsistency by turning the whole matter around and say that this precisely *shows* that claims of absolute or unconditioned nature, claims from a God's eye view, is impossible. But this is indeed a peculiar understanding of the matter; that certain thoughts should be like some sort of empirical evidence which prove a certain thesis by way of induction: that my claim that there absolutely is no absolute knowledge shows itself to be inconsistent is *evidence* that there is no absolute knowledge. The basic anti-foundationalist claim is that there is no knowledge that is not conditioned – on the charge that this claim itself is unconditioned and hence inconsistent, the anti-foundationalist responds that this only proves the point, namely that it is meaningless to speak about unconditioned knowledge. But that the denial of absolute knowledge is meaningless, does not mean that an affirmation of it is – I cannot see why one cannot claim that on the contrary the inconsistency *only shows* that an absolute rejection of absolute knowledge is meaningless.

Opposed to the inconsistency inherent in anti-foundationalist views, there seems at first to be no problem with the claim: some things may be known absolutely. As an example of this we could bring about a statement about the anti-foundationalist view: I know absolutely that the anti-foundationalist view is inconsistent. If a reason were to be given – also of absolute nature – I could say that the inconsistency arises due to the nature of the concepts involved in forming such a judgement; I try to make limitation unlimited, while the rational position to hold is the opposite: the limits of thought must only be given limited significance, i.e. the finitude of thought must not be given infinite significance.

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<sup>39</sup> William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations*, State University Press of New York 1994, p. 54

## Back to Hegel

For Hegel discussions like this points to the deeper structures of truth of knowledge and how it is to be founded, and Hegel claims: “Nachdem aber die Dialektik vom Beweise getrennt worden, ist in der Tat der Begriff des philosophischen Beweisens verlorengegangen.”<sup>40</sup> *PhG* may be seen as an attempt at trying to found the system, but this cannot be thought of in a foundationalist manner, where knowledge is to be founded on something immediately certain, since:

“Der Anfang der Philosophie muß entweder ein *Vermitteltes* oder *Unmittelbares* sein, und es ist leicht zu zeigen, daß er weder das eine noch das andere sein könne; somit findet die eine oder die andere Weise des Anfangens ihre Widerlegung.”<sup>41</sup>

This is due to the structure of thought itself, and, if Hegel is right, it is an essential aspect of reality also. The whole of *PhG* aims to dissolve the reflective attitude to reality, in a sort of reenactment or recollection of history as it has gone by, where one can see the truth emerging and developing. Consciousness sees the essence of the human experience as the same as the essence of itself; its internal dynamics are the same. By way of despair, consciousness becomes aware of itself containing the criteria of truth, and when that is recognized to its full extent it can reconsider the past and identify the structure of what is external and internal as coinciding.

Errol E. Harris presents an interpretation of Hegel’s introductory comments in *WdL* quoted above where the beginning of science was said to be both mediate and immediate; Hegel claims to have demonstrated the identity of thought and being in *PhG*, but the whole of *WdL* is the demonstration of the same, while any introduction is a sort of inessential reflection mainly concerned with giving “preliminary explanations to ease the approach of the reader to the real starting point,”<sup>42</sup> since the identity of thought and being will always be “provisional and unsatisfactory until established in the body of science.”<sup>43</sup>

Another interpretation, for instance presented by Justus Hartnack,<sup>44</sup> claims that *PhG* is part of the mediation of the beginning of the *Logic*, and that sensuous consciousness is the ground of consciousness in general. However, I believe that this interpretation is erroneous, since the ground of consciousness really is a relation of intentionality between subject and

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<sup>40</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/61

<sup>41</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, 5/65

<sup>42</sup> Errol E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*, University Press of America, 1983, p. 6

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6

<sup>44</sup> Justus Hartnack, *Hegels Logik*, C.A. Reitzel Forlag 1990

object; consciousness is always consciousness of something, but the something need not be sensuous. Rather, consciousness simply requires that its object is not identical to itself, i.e. the object needs to be a kind of difference as a minimum, and offer resistance, so that the difference becomes something real to the subject. The task of *PhG* in relation to *WdL* is that it seeks to demonstrate that the following is not possible to maintain: the relation of difference between being and thought is absolute. Its task is not to show that the *Logic* must be founded upon sensuous consciousness.

I will not be able to go into a deep analysis of these matters here, but there are important points that need to be made about the relation between *PhG* and the *Logic*. *PhG* can be read in many different ways and certain elements can be seen to stand on their own, for instance where the dialectics of master and slave is seen as giving a general structure of human relationships of domination and submission, but our main concern here is the philosophical function that *PhG* has as a whole. Granted, *PhG* has numerous other functions as well. Michael N. Forster has given an overview of the many functions that can be found in *PhG* and probably were part of Hegel's intentions with the work. He identifies 20 different functions or tasks that *PhG* has, falling into three categories: pedagogical, metaphysical and epistemological, but holds the main function of *PhG* to be that of overcoming the numerous internal and external splits that the human being experiences in the modern world. The focus is that issues concerning community and consensus are the most fundamental when it comes to the validity of Hegel's philosophy. My approach here will be more along the lines of the anti-foundational reading represented by William Maker and Richard Dien Winfield, who read *PhG* as a self-sublating mediation, answering questions about the nature of a presuppositionless science.<sup>45</sup>

There is a question regarding *transition* in *PhG*: do we have a sort of necessary deduction beginning with sensory perception and ending with absolute knowing? There especially seems to be a kind of "jump" or transition in the sense of moving from one place to another with a breach in continuity between the chapter on consciousness and self-consciousness. Even if there is a transition of this kind I do not believe this presents a problem fatal to the philosophical task of *PhG*. Rather presenting this as a transition of the external kind – of the kind that is a seemingly contingent jump from one place to another disrupting the necessary development of the matter – is more truthful to how the human being finds himself in relation to the world at first when he already has begun reflecting. There are some similarities with Fichte's two possible systems here, and Schelling's system of the objective subject-object and

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<sup>45</sup> William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations*, State University Press of New York 1994, p. 83

subjective subject-object. We find ourselves in the world as knowers and doers; the practical and theoretical relation to reality. The first takes the object as its starting point, and tries to make a true statement about it; it moves its thought so as to make the thought correspond to reality. This is the attitude of consciousness, while self-consciousness acts upon reality in order to make it correspond to its desire. This finds an expression in Goethe's *Faust* in the following way:

Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,  
Die eine will sich von der andern trennen;  
Die eine hält, in derber Liebeslust,  
Sich an die Welt mit klammernden Organen;  
Die andere hebt gewaltsam sich vom Dust  
Zu den Gefilden hoher Ahnen.

(Faust I, 1112-1117)

One of the human beings relation to the world that is spoken of here is as a knower trying to grasp reality as it is in itself, while the other is characterized by its desire directed towards what is immediately present in it. The relation to the world as a knower seeks what lies behind, over and deep within what is immediate, while the other seeks satisfaction by changing or consuming what is immediate. These relations to reality usually run side by side in everyday life, but nonetheless have different phenomenological developments if one looks at them in isolation, an isolation of the kind that comes about when man reflects upon himself. So this is a duality which becomes very much present when one reflects about oneself, and a feeling of an internal split becomes present if these two attitudes cannot be united. Actually many of the most immediate and fundamental philosophical questions can be seen to arise in relation to such splits within the subject itself, or between the internal and external: how does my thinking relate to the reality in which I act? Must I not know the truth, before I can do what is good? If I do not know the truth, can I then know the good? Can I come to know the truth before acting? *PhG* implicitly rests on a denial of the last question; it is rather through trying and failing to understand and appropriate reality, that one learns what is true and good – failure in the knowledge of reality is essential to coming to know how it is in truth, failing to satisfy desire is essential to know what is good. In thinking about the object of consciousness I change the object; the realization of this and that the inner of the object is the same as my inside, namely thinking. This is the movement within the chapter on consciousness in *PhG*. In trying to act in the world as a subject, one experiences frustration of desire, lordship and bondage, scepticism, stoicism and unhappy consciousness – the experience that my subjectivity will never be

satisfied in relation to the objective side of reality. Finding oneself as oneself in oneself, and experiencing that what one does in the world also is an act of the world in oneself, one is in a sense essentially tied to the human experience as a whole. A sort of *indifferenzpunkt* is then to be found; there is reason within my acts, and reason within the objects. And moreover it is the same kind of reason, and one discovers that this was in fact a presupposition, or really the telos of the experience of consciousness, which could not be discovered other than through failure in knowledge and satisfaction.

When these kinds of insights are reached, the attitude towards what is given is changed, in particular the attitude towards positive sciences. Any kind of knowledge ultimately relying on something given is seen as something illusory, since what is external is recognized primarily thus because it is taken as external by the knower. There always will be a difference between the concept of a given as it is understood in positive sciences and the given itself, which is fundamentally seen as something always mediated, and therefore not truly a given in the sense of the concept one has of the given when it is to be something fundamental in relation to knowledge. From this the critique of positive sciences arises.

### **With What Must Science Begin?**

A positive science is a science that takes its object as immediately determined as it is, without taking the relation to the knowing subject into consideration. This relation is itself vital for any theory to come about; if the subject were to play no role in positive sciences, doing science would be nothing more than perceiving the determinations of the objects as they were. By coming up with a theory as to what the relations are that hold between the objects, the subject itself steps into the determination of the object. It gives the essential relationships between objects or the laws that determine those relations, which are to explain how objects appear to us. However, it is not a given that the subject does not play a part in deciding what is to count as the object's immediacy – what is to count as a given? Just in isolating one aspect of reality as an object opposed to another object the subject has made a change to the world so far as this isolation made in thought also is understood as something essential to the objects in themselves, while in reality what is for the subject appears in the unified whole of consciousness. Giving reasons for why some objects are interesting as objects for science, in what way and respect, necessarily involves the thinking subject as such. The givens of science may also change; objective relations in the world need not be static – laws can change. So there

is a sort of arbitrariness that “taints” the objects of science; the subject engaged in observing and theorizing from without bringing its own determinations into the object so that it seems impossible to decide what really stems from the object and not from the subject, and from within, in that the objective relations in the world themselves are not absolute. This point can also be made if one looks at the history of science; what counts as objective, as givens, is subjected to change – how are we then to decide when the given is reached as it is in itself? Positive science seems to be more about establishing a relationship between the knower and what is posited as its object, and less about knowing objects as they are in themselves. What is posited, what is taken to count as positive, can then be explained by referring to for instance social, psychological or historical matters.

If the validity of science is then not limited, but one still claims that science is about absolute knowledge of things as they are objectively, science seems to be subjected to the same problems as those which arise within metaphysics; something that is not perceived by the senses is used as a foundation for that which is, in order to explain it. How do we know that what we set out as a fundamental metaphysical truth is not relative to our choosing to do so? In trying to answer this we are in principle again left with an immediate truth which validity must be taken for granted, and the problem just repeats itself.

One solution to the problem is for instance that internal consistency is to be the hallmark of truth; truth is about having a large set of propositions which do not logically contradict each other. Truth here becomes a matter of degree; the theory that has the the most internal consistency, is most complete, or is the best combination of both, is to be preferred. However, that internal consistency should be the criterion can only be asserted, or posited, metaphysically, and so the problem has repeated itself once more.

Another solution is the pragmatic one. The longing for absolute truth should be restricted or exposed as fancy; it can never be reached – in fact, there is no such thing, since all justification of truth rests on pragmatic agreements. Discourse is open-ended and no claim to truth is in principle better than another – nothing is to be justified other than by referring to matters that are internal to the different areas of practical life. Truth is about what *works* in relation to what people do, want to do or already have done in the world. The problem here is avoided only in a self-referential manner – truth is what works practically; this is so since it is practical. In addition to this it implicitly also involves a description of matters in the world that is to be a true description. The pragmatist cannot avoid implicitly making statements that are about something; a state of affairs in the world that can be otherwise, again implying that the statement can be untrue. And again truth can then only be established by asserting something to

be true; it rests ultimately on an assertion – one which could be otherwise, but is true, since it is stated thus.

It may seem that what is left after considerations like these is an abandonment of epistemology; philosophy cannot establish truth – for all practical matters the pragmatist view will then prevail, as long as the community as a whole does not despair at the negative outcome of the philosophers investigation. “Truth” will be a word used as it always has; discussions will run their course within the different areas of practical life, but will never undermine community as a whole. A view like this rests on another view that what the human being does and experiences as a knower for himself is not as fundamental as what he does and experiences as a member of a community. Against this it is not hard to show cases where a human being risks and even loses his life on the ground of what it holds to be true. Now, if this is possible for some humans, why is it not possible for whole communities? The question remains open, but even if it is practically impossible at the time being, I cannot see why it *could not become* possible; and considering that for single human beings this becomes possible due to considerations that has to do with truth in relation to the world, the presence or lack of truth can be just what changes the community as a whole.

Can knowledge ever overcome its imbedded perspectival character that continually leaves us with a negative result if it is thought through consistently? The whole matter can be seen to make a radical change, when the question is asked in the following manner: “Can it not be that the subject really determines the object, such that for me to know the object really only consists of knowing myself?” Having objective knowledge become a matter of investigation of the subjective conditions may be a great relief, since I am in direct contact with myself and knowledge of myself seems infinitely more promising than knowing something outside of myself. If I then can establish that there are no important determinations to the object other than the ones that have their origin in the subject, I seem close to a what may even be termed “objective knowledge”; there are no meaningful determinations of the object for me other than the ones I supply myself – since I can know myself, I can then also know how these objects are shaped.

In my first encounters with the objects of knowledge, it is thought that is in immediate contact with my subjectivity – I move my own thoughts; and determining truth means to give truth determinations in thought. Thought is the medium which is in immediate contact with my subjectivity on the one hand and the objective on the other. Thought is also such that it can think its own thoughts over; it can be an object for itself. And now, since thought has this status as a medium, as an instrument through which I know the world, I must submit this medium

itself to an investigation; it might be that I will find that thought itself is such an instrument that is incapable of knowing its objects as they are in themselves, whether it be truth, the world, or the subject. Investigating thought also means that I investigate myself, so this task will be right at the middle of the radical change of focus from the object to the subject just considered. Thought itself is submitted to a critical examination; I might find that thought is incapable of knowledge in general, or I may find that there are limits in relation to the objects I may know anything about, but hopefully I will see how my subjectivity limits and determines the object, such that my self-knowledge can become the standard of objectivity as far as I am concerned; as far as the objects are things that actually appear before me or in principle possibly can appear before me. Hegel describes this attitude as a natural *Vorstellung* in *PhG*, implying that it is more a case of some imagined scientific attitude than one that is in contact with what is real.<sup>46</sup> There is a certain justification to this examination when thought is conceived as an instrument; if thought is an instrument of getting hold of what is absolute, it will obviously not leave the absolute as it is, since an instrument is just this that it shapes something so as to make it accessible to us. Do we have a guarantee that something essential is not left out in the process of mediation? The thought then is this: we need to investigate the instrument, in order to know what it leaves out or how it transforms its object; when we know this we can take this into consideration with what we perceive through the instrument and so come to see that which the instrument brings about is in itself. Hegel regards this as a superfluous activity, since: “Wenn wir von einem formierten Dinge das wieder wegnehmen, was das Werkzeug daran getan hat, so ist uns das Ding - hier das Absolute - gerade wieder soviel als vor dieser somit überflüssigen Bemühung.”<sup>47</sup> Removing what we had in the case of the mediated knowledge of the absolute, it is again either removed outside of our knowledge, or we must again reshape it through our instrument in order to come to know it.

The strongest and most precise formulation of the critique of cognition as an instrument I believe Hegel presents in *Enz.* §10:

“Will man sich jedoch nicht mit Worten täuschen, so ist leicht zu sehen, daß wohl andere Instrumente sich auf sonstige Weise etwa untersuchen und beurteilen lassen als durch das Vornehmen der eigentümlichen Arbeit, der sie bestimmt sind. Aber die Untersuchung des Erkennens kann nicht anders als *erkennend* geschehen; bei diesem sogenannten Werkzeuge heißt dasselbe untersuchen nichts anderes, als es erkennen.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/68

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3/69

<sup>48</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/54



In ordinary life it will of course be useful to investigate the instrument before one uses it, but when it comes to thought, considering it as an instrument is a misleading analogy. Investigating the faculty of cognition must involve a cognition; the impossible challenge is to *know before one knows*.

Continuing to stick with the instrument-analogy, which does seem plausible at first, one faces a challenge similar to what Hegel describes as learning to swim before one enters the water. One can of course practice on land, imitating the motions and likewise, but when does one reach the point when one knows that one is a swimmer? Knowledge can then come to be seen as impossible; it can never be achieved, due to that thought always is about something – it mediates – and there is always room for error. In making a statement that is supposed to be true one *can* succeed but one *can also* fall into error – which of these two is the case can at least not be known beforehand, and then the best alternative can seem to be to not make any statements that are supposed to be true. Hegel also treats this as the fear of falling into error. This fear can establish a general mistrust in relation to science, which makes it hard for anything to become real science – if one always has to make limits to what one possibly can say in relation to truth, one will never go ahead making a claim that can show itself to be actually true. In Hegel's view such a mistrust really already takes many different ideas for granted, for instance this that knowledge is an instrument or medium and that the difference between ourselves and cognition will always remain fundamental and insurpassable. Mistrust more properly has its place for Hegel in that the mistrust itself should be mistrusted, and he asks us if we should not rather be concerned with that the fear of error might be the real error.<sup>49</sup>

It seems as if the radically different approach to knowledge should be even more radical to begin with. It is natural to see self-criticism to be part of a general critical attitude which is to avoid making arbitrary assumptions about truth – why not submit this view itself to a critical examination? This is what Hegel begins with in the introduction to *PhG*, and the result is that one needs to start making claims to knowledge if one is not for ever going to remain forever formulating new critical levels, i.e. the thought of that one must criticize the thought of criticising the critique, and so on ad infinitum, before one actually begins to know. One should not however believe that Hegel simply rejects that cognition itself must be investigated in order for knowledge to become actual; in a sense this is what *PhG* is all about, but the thought here is not that the faculty of knowledge must be put under investigation before knowledge has any chance at being actual, but that one must begin to try to know before one can ever hope to

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<sup>49</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/68

make it actual. One needs to enter the water. Maybe one already knows how to swim, maybe not, maybe one drowns and maybe someone comes to the rescue, but this remains to be seen.

Is it so that one cannot escape that in any statement on the nature of cognition there is an implication of a unity of thought and reality, in that one knows what can become possible objects for knowledge and that they must behave in accordance with the nature of cognition? Objects not conforming to the nature of cognition would be impossible to know anything about; we could not come into contact with them, and hence they are irrelevant for us. Hegel does not consider this matter along such lines. While statements on the nature of cognition might of course be untrue for Hegel, in *PhG* such untruthful accounts of knowledge are to become a part of the revelation of the essential nature of knowledge when one continues the investigation even though failure happens over and over again. So any doubts to the effect that Hegel does not have a critical attitude towards his own philosophical project should be pointed towards *PhG*, where consciousness continually has to face that the world does not respond to what truth is supposed to be, in what is characterized as the pathway of doubt:

“Das natürliche Bewußtsein wird sich erweisen, nur Begriff des Wissens oder nicht reales Wissen zu sein. Indem es aber unmittelbar sich vielmehr für das reale Wissen hält, so hat dieser Weg für es negative Bedeutung, und ihm gilt das vielmehr für Verlust seiner selbst, was die Realisierung des Begriffs ist; denn es verliert auf diesem Wege seine Wahrheit. Er kann deswegen als der Weg des *Zweifels* angesehen werden oder eigentlicher als der Weg der Verzweiflung; auf ihm geschieht nämlich nicht das, was unter Zweifeln verstanden zu werden pflegt, ein Rütteln an dieser oder jener vermeinten Wahrheit, auf welches ein gehöriges Wiederverschwinden des Zweifels und eine Rückkehr zu jener Wahrheit erfolgt, so daß am Ende die Sache genommen wird wie vorher. Sondern er ist die bewußte Einsicht in die Unwahrheit des erscheinenden Wissens, dem dasjenige das Reellste ist, was in Wahrheit vielmehr nur der nicht realisierte Begriff ist.”<sup>50</sup>

This might seem more in tune with Descartes than with critical philosophy, but this is not a methodical doubt – for consciousness it is what is experienced; for the one doing phenomenology in the sense that it is done in *PhG*, it is a kind of despair that does not have a onesided negative result. It is part of *Bildung* or the development of consciousness which eventually will make absolute knowledge possible for it, but until that, consciousness can only rely on hope and faith if not to become hostile to science or attempts at knowledge in general. As we soon shall see, the road of despair does in a sense have a negative result in *PhG* as it reaches absolute knowledge, but the result is also in a very important sense positive; a view

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 3/72

presented and elaborated by William Maker.<sup>51</sup> Maker presents the received view of *PhG* in the following way, a view that he claims there is consensus on, represented by for instance Jürgen Habermas, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jean Hyppolite, J.N. Findlay, Alexander Kojève, Georg Lukacs, Herbert Marcuse, Otto Pöggeler, Stanley Rosen, and Charles Taylor:<sup>52</sup>

“Although there is disagreement in the received view as to whether the *Phenomenology* presents anything like an argument, and further disagreement about just what this argument might consist in, there *is* consensus that the aim of the *Phenomenology* as an introduction to science is a positive one. The *Phenomenology* was designed, according to the received view, either to present a demonstrative argument whose function is to establish and ground the nature and validity of absolute knowing, or, according to those who see the argument to be more rethorical and persuasive than demonstrative, to elevate the reader propaedeutically to the level of absolute knowledge and to convince him thereby of its validity.”<sup>53</sup>

The received view also understands what Hegel means by absolute knowledge as a “pure reflective self-knowing of an absolute self-consciousness or absolute subject.”<sup>54</sup> This is said to be a structure that is the positive result of *PhG*. Maker goes against this in order to understand certain statements of Hegel that points in opposite directions. For Maker *PhG* needs to be understood as having a negative result, meaning that absolute knowledge is not an actual knowledge, not a determinate structure and not a methodological principle.<sup>55</sup>

The two statements that go in opposite direction Hegel makes in the beginning of the *Logic*. The first:

“So muß der Anfang *absoluter* oder, was hier gleichbedeutend ist, abstrakter Anfang sein; er darf so *nichts voraussetzen*, muß durch nichts vermittelt sein noch einen Grund haben; er soll vielmehr selbst Grund der ganzen Wissenschaft sein. Er muß daher schlechthin *ein Unmittelbares* sein oder vielmehr nur *das Unmittelbare* selbst. Wie er nicht gegen Anderes eine Bestimmung haben kann, so kann er auch keine in sich, keinen Inhalt enthalten, denn dergleichen wäre Unterscheidung und Beziehung von Verschiedenem aufeinander, somit eine Vermittlung. Der Anfang ist also das *reine Sein*.”<sup>56</sup>

In that the beginning must be absolute, it can only be abstract, but at the same time cannot have any presuppositions, i.e. it must be without ground and mediation, which means that it rather must be the immediate itself. But how can something be abstract without being an abstraction of something concrete? If it is an abstraction from something concrete, it has a presupposition.

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<sup>51</sup> William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations*, State University Press of New York 1994

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 70

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 69-70

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 70

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 73

<sup>56</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/68

The second:

Die Logik hat insofern die Wissenschaft des erscheinenden Geistes zu ihrer Voraussetzung, welche die Notwendigkeit und damit den Beweis der Wahrheit des Standpunkts, der das reine Wissen ist, wie dessen Vermittlung überhaupt enthält und aufzeigt. In dieser Wissenschaft des erscheinenden Geistes wird von dem empirischen, *sinnlichen* Bewußtsein ausgegangen, und dieses ist das eigentliche *unmittelbare* Wissen; daselbst wird erörtert, was an diesem unmittelbaren Wissen ist.<sup>57</sup>

Any adequate account of *PhG* must in Makers view explain these apparently contradictory statements.<sup>58</sup> Hegel actually claims that the knowing which results from *PhG*, a knowing that has sublated all reference to an outside, is without distinction. It is not possible to determine if it is a knowing of this or that – and so it ceases to be knowing.<sup>59</sup> The *Logic* does therefore not begin with any determinate structure. Further it cannot be said – it is at least not Hegel’s intention – to have any method that one is to use from without; this simple immediacy is not to be treated in such a manner as when the method is forced upon the subject in order to reveal truth, since in the *Logic* method and content are one within this science.<sup>60</sup> For instance one cannot use the laws of thinking as a method; I cannot proceed in accordance with the principle of treating the matter in such a way that it reveals itself as either self-contradictory or identical, since the laws of thought are themselves in need of being established. Presupposing a method of non-contradiction means taking something for granted – do we know beforehand that a “law” of non-contradiction itself is not in contradiction with itself? According to Hegel this is not so, but as long as this has been discovered, it will be easier to see why Hegel will not even allow a law of non-contradiction to be a universal guiding principle, although the resolution of contradictions is one of the main themes of Hegel’s philosophy as a whole. A method cannot be stated beforehand, but will emerge through the exposition of the *Logic*, and only when at the end it can be considered as such, as Hegel also does, especially at the end of *WdL*.

Maker proposes to treat the apparently contradictory statements in *WdL* in light of his idea of *PhG* as a self-sublating mediation or presupposition for the *Logic*. Only if the negative outcome of *PhG* is so utterly negative as to turn into its opposite can the statements contrasted above be reconciled.<sup>61</sup> The idea of self-sublation will become clearer in the treatment of the *Aufhebung* in chapter IV, where the dialectics and sublation of the concept of being is treated.

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<sup>57</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p.5/67

<sup>58</sup> William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations*, State University Press of New York 1994, p. 72

<sup>59</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/68

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p.5/35

<sup>61</sup> William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations*, State University Press of New York 1994, p. 76

This idea will have some paradoxical consequences, in that for instance one can begin to speak of *PhG* as a presupposition for presuppositionless science. As Maker formulates it: “The *Phenomenology* is the presupposition for presuppositionless science because it indicates the necessity of the radically indeterminate and presuppositionless character of the absolute beginning of philosophical science.”<sup>62</sup> The point is that *PhG* ends with no actual knowing in the sense of the usual relation between subject and object; it is this structure itself that is sublated. *PhG* does not establish a method or principle for how science is done, especially not that the structure of knowledge is the identity of subject and object. *PhG* is a presupposition in the sense that it is to show that presuppositionless science cannot have any such externally determined way to go about matters in order to reach the truth. In this sense it is also a contingent presupposition; it is only relevant in so far as it is to undermine or destroy any attempt at understanding knowledge on the model of consciousness. It is this model itself that gives rise to the thought that a method needs to be found that in itself guarantees truth. Insofar as consciousness in *PhG* ends with an identity between subject and object it cannot by itself go any further; it can no longer have any knowledge *of* anything determinate, where there is a separation between the knower and what is known – the ordinary structure of knowing is suspended, and so *PhG* can be seen to have a sceptical result. Consciousness finds itself where it says to itself: I can at least not be satisfied by the standards of knowledge that the quest for knowledge and certainty began. And in fact, for Hegel, there is no necessary move from *PhG* to the *Logic* – it can be regarded as arbitrary.<sup>63</sup> The resolve can be made to submit pure thought itself to an investigation; this is the absolute beginning, but also one that is an abstract beginning, in the sense that it does not begin from concrete concerns or grounds, since these belong to external considerations, which by now have been surpassed.

The arbitrariness of the beginning is not opposed to freedom as it is experienced in thought, as it is in practical life. Arbitrariness in pure thinking consists simply in that I can begin or not immediately as I decide to do so, and the beginning is then also equally immediate; no determination of thought will result from this arbitrary move. The beginning of the *Logic* is absolute because it is free; it happens in the realm of thought which I alone occupy, and which does not have any determinations other than those which I make.

That the move from *PhG* to the *Logic* is arbitrary means that I can reject any move to go further, I can turn my thought to anything particular that is present, or go about as usual as determined by what I want or desire. What is present for thought when absolute knowing also

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<sup>62</sup> William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations*, State University Press of New York 1994, p. 77

<sup>63</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/68

is present is pure immediacy – how then do I go about, if I am to come to know this immediacy? Here it is interesting to bring to mind what we have seen Hegel say, that in the end we shall have returned to the beginning. If we look at the attitude which *PhG* begins with, this is precisely the attitude which Hegel says that one has to have in relations to thought in the *WdL*.<sup>64</sup> We ought not to mould the objects which we are treating in order to suit ourselves, something we can do, considering that thought is subjective and we are free; on the contrary we ought to let our thought accomodate the objects, so that we can come to know them as they are. The attitude being the same, the difference consists that in *PhG* the object is what is present for our senses, while in *WdL* it is immediacy as such.

The claim of consciousness here would be: there is naturally a difference between being as thought and real being; the former is *about* the latter, and how can we know that they coincide? The challenge to this point of view is to make sense of the difference between the concept of *being* in itself as thought and as real; how is this concept not the same in both aspects? If this relation cannot be explained without ultimately relying on the difference between thought and reality as posited, is it so that *being* is different in content when it comes to its existence as thought or as reality? If this is so, how can we legitimately speak of the same thing, i.e. being as thought and as reality? Is it a matter of abstract being and concrete being? Is this not two determinations of what is really the same, in the sense that being as abstract and being as concrete does neither add nor remove something from the concept of *being* in itself?

It would soon seem that in order to begin science one has to reinstate this structure of consciousness if one wants to satisfy a demand for objectivity; there is something which I turn into an object for my knowledge, and I must determine what I think of this object in accordance with its own nature and not mine. In sciences other than philosophy the object is made out to be for instance numbers, as in mathematics, or living organisms, as in biology. In the same way, philosophy has thinking as its object – but thinking is not an object like any other object; in pure thinking distinctions between subject and object are abstract, or made by reflecting on the material, and hence putting oneself in an external relation to it.

This problem especially arises when the focus is on the arbitrariness of the beginning of the *Logic*; that its ground being only in the act of the thinking subject. How can it then have an objective element? Hegel has the following comment on this in *Enz.* § 17, which will be quoted as a whole, since it contains formulations of the goal of the *Logic* which are simple and direct:

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 5/25

Für den *Anfang*, den die Philosophie zu machen hat, scheint sie im allgemeinen ebenso mit einer subjektiven Voraussetzung wie die anderen Wissenschaften zu beginnen, nämlich einen besonderen Gegenstand, wie anderwärts Raum, Zahl usf., so hier das *Denken* zum Gegenstande des Denkens machen zu müssen. Allein es ist dies der freie Akt des Denkens, sich auf den Standpunkt zu stellen, wo es für sich selber ist und *sich* hiermit *seinen Gegenstand selbst erzeugt* und *gibt*. Ferner muß der Standpunkt, welcher so als *unmittelbarer* erscheint, innerhalb der Wissenschaft sich zum *Resultate*, und zwar zu ihrem letzten machen, in welchem sie ihren Anfang wieder erreicht und in sich zurückkehrt. Auf diese Weise zeigt sich die Philosophie als ein in sich zurückgehender Kreis, der keinen Anfang im Sinne anderer Wissenschaften hat, so daß der Anfang nur eine Beziehung auf das Subjekt, als welches sich entschließen will zu philosophieren, nicht aber auf die Wissenschaft als solche hat. - Oder, was dasselbe ist, der Begriff der Wissenschaft und somit der erste - und weil er der erste ist, enthält er die Trennung, daß das Denken Gegenstand für ein (gleichsam äußerliches) philosophierendes Subjekt ist - muß von der Wissenschaft selbst erfaßt werden. Dies ist sogar ihr einziger Zweck, Tun und Ziel, zum Begriffe ihres Begriffes und so zu ihrer Rückkehr und Befriedigung zu gelangen.<sup>65</sup>

Here it is simply stated that the beginning of science is a free act of thinking, an act where what is given is produced in this act itself. Thought relates to itself; what is for it, standing against it, is of the same nature as itself, and in this sense it is free; it can determine itself out of itself, i.e. internally. But is this not something that happens only internally to the subject? It can be granted that the subject relates to itself, but is not this independant from objective relations in the world? This is what is to be shown in the movements within science itself; when the goal of science is reached, it must be shown as the beginning itself. In this sense it is one whole self-grounding development. This is in a sense a holist view, but on another level than what is usually considered within holist positions, i.e. the *Logic* is on the level of such thought determinations that themselves are used when speaking about “objective relations in the world” and similar statements. Initially in the *Logic* those termes are used in a way that is not arbitrary – the *Logic* is to contain those determinations which make it meaningful to speak about “the world”, “the objective”, about relations universally and so on.

When science has returned to its beginning it is also the case that the relationship between the philosophizing subject to philosophy itself can be explained – and only when the return has been made; i.e. when the whole of science has been taken into consideration. The content of science and its relation to the thinking subject is explained in relation to the Concept, *Der Begriff*, or the third part of *WdL*.

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<sup>65</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/63

## Intellectual Intuition Again

We are now in a position to make a further comment on the common ground between Fichte and Hegel. No one can begin science for anyone and there is no necessity in such a beginning: this is both Hegel's and Fichte's view, as has been shown. What Hegel wants to do is to cancel out the objections that rest on certain presuppositions without foundation, and open up for presuppositionlessness. The difference is that Fichte begins from a subjective side; from the ego, and that Hegel seems to begin with an objective side. At least when the actual determinations of science have arrived at the scene, i.e. within the *Logic*. True enough, science begins arbitrarily with the subject, but the first part of the logic, the objective logic, contains determinations which do not explicitly contain a reference to a subject. It begins with being, and not the I.

A case can be made for beginning philosophy with the ego as the first truth, since it is something of which we are immediately certain, which at the same time is not an idea which can be determined as different in itself from the different subjects; what is common to all human beings is that they essentially share in the determination of being an ego. Hegel believes that the idea of beginning with the ego is misleading since it on the one hand seems so utterly simple and abstract – it goes along with every possible perception and thought, and on the other hand is mixed together with the empirical ego, which everyone deals with in ordinary life, and so is seen as utterly familiar. Both abstractly and concretely, theoretically and practically the ego is there. Hegel's critique here is that the certainty really rests on the familiarity in which we experience the ego in practical matters;<sup>66</sup> not on the extremely complex relations of the ego and the non-ego as expounded in Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. If the confusion between the empirical ego and the pure ego is to be remedied, one has to concentrate on the ego which has come about through intellectual intuition, and this is indeed an ego that *has come about*. That one should raise oneself to this standpoint is a subjective demand, and the whole movement rests on that one begins with abstracting from empirical content. It is therefore not immediate; what Hegel demands, in accordance with the task and justification of the result of the *Logic*, is that the progression from empirical to pure ego is to be shown as a necessity that lies within the ego itself.

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<sup>66</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/76



However, Hegel does not believe that Fichte is on the wrong track:

“Es ist hierbei noch die wesentliche Bemerkung zu machen, daß, wenn *an sich wohl Ich* als das reine Wissen oder als intellektuelle Anschauung bestimmt und als Anfang behauptet werden könnte, es in der Wissenschaft nicht um das zu tun ist, was *an sich* oder *innerlich* vorhanden sei, sondern um das Dasein des Innerlichen *im Denken* und um die *Bestimmtheit*, die ein solches in diesem Dasein hat.”<sup>67</sup>

Hegel believes that in intellectual intuition what is present is not the ego – what is present is being; a thought – the thought and act are one, but considered as a whole it is being. One could make abstractions in this, in saying that a thinker must be present in order for there to be a thought; but does this subject add anything to the content of the thought at hand? What if I remove this subject from what is immediately present – would I lose anything of the thought? The thinker acts in order for there to be a thought. If one is to identify what this act is, must it not be said that it is nothing more than being? Being is thought, being is something present – what more do I add to this, if I add a thinker? It can be said that if I remove the subject, the thought of being would not have appeared – the thinker answers the *why*; why is there a thought at all? The thought itself is to answer the question as to *what*; what is thought? That something has been thought by someone does not seem to add one bit to the *content* of the thought.

It seems as if Fichte focuses on the subjective side, while Hegel is determined to only consider the objective side. It can be said that in order to think the thinker at all one must of course make it present as a thought; and is not the thought of being then again more primitive? A thinker *is* there. A thinker is an instantiation of the concept of being. In order to determine the thinker more, I will need to add more determinate categories; but they are again first to be criticized for Hegel, before they can be used. Therefore being must first be determined before further determinations can be given to the thinker. One needs to remember that these considerations happen from the standpoint of absolute knowing, where the structure of consciousness has been dissolved; using it in order to determine the ego has been seen to be useless; dependant on presuppositions which are invalid on their own. Nonetheless there seems to be an essential relationship here between thinker and thought; one cannot remove the one without making the other meaningless. We will see how Hegel returns to treat the thinker in the subjective logic later.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 5/77

Hegel ends the discussion of how science must begin in *WdL*, with a result that is essentially the same as in *PhG*, where the emptiness of being is said to be the beginning of science:

“Diese Einsicht ist selbst so einfach, daß dieser Anfang als solcher keiner Vorbereitung noch weiteren Einleitung bedarf; und diese Vorläufigkeit von Räsonnement über ihn konnte nicht die Absicht haben, ihn herbeizuführen, als vielmehr alle Vorläufigkeit zu entfernen”.<sup>68</sup>

Again reflections of the kind that we have seen in this chapter will remain external, and the only result that is possible is that the only possible preliminary to science is the preliminary that eliminates preliminaries. Consciousness must recognise itself as the infinite return to itself that has become present as being. To begin science is the simplest of all things; one begins to think. On the other hand one cannot presuppose anything regarding what the relations between the categories are; not even the content of the categories can at first be taken as givens. Specifically one cannot presuppose that for instance infinity is different from finitude – as if anyone did not know that, Hegel remarks<sup>69</sup> – but the truth of this is yet to be established, and this will be part of the task of the *Logic*. If there is to be a relationship between these two, they cannot be absolutely different.

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<sup>68</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/79

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5/33

### III. THE NATURE OF THE TASK OF *WISSENSCHAFT DER LOGIK*

”Das System der Logik ist das Reich der Schatten, die Welt der einfachen Wesenheiten, von aller sinnlichen Konkretion befreit. Das Studium dieser Wissenschaft, der Aufenthalt und die Arbeit in diesem Schattenreich ist die absolute Bildung und Zucht des Bewußtseins.”<sup>70</sup>

Fichte recognized the most fundamental task of philosophy as being the following: given at least two possibilities for how anything can be, philosophy is to supply the ground for why reality is this way and not another.<sup>71</sup> In general this can be seen as the task of metaphysics understood as the science of the fundamentals of reality. The great problem then becomes what criteria one is to use when determining reality as this and not this. This can be seen as one of the major tasks of the *Logic*, although it also goes deeper, in that it is an investigation into the concepts that we use when forming any thought at all, and hence even the concept of reality is to be thought through. And since this is the case, I believe Hegel can be defended against claims to the effect that he is moving within an outdated paradigm, which treats philosophical issues that should rather be understood as the expression of a certain age, etc. In the *Logic* Hegel wants to supply a sort of super-paradigm, namely an understanding of the judgements and categories involved in any formation of thoughts.

What was earlier described as naïve consciousness, has something essentially similar to speculation or the *Logic* in general in that thinking and what is thought about are present immediately as a whole, and any isolation of the two is a step into the attitude to thought that was treated in *PhG*. However there is also something essentially different from naïve consciousness, in that the *Logic* moves within abstractions utterly removed from what is else part of the immediate experience of life; it exhibits an extreme isolation of a moment that in life occurs foremost within a whole.

To sum up our consideration of the *Logic* up to this point: it is to be that science of that which develops itself through itself spontaneously in thinking, not resting on grounds or reflection or some kind of assurance of inner intuition, and not borrowing its method from the other sciences; the method is not to be separated from the content of the movements within the logic itself. Hegel maintains that it is only this self-developing method which enables philosophy to be an objective demonstrated science.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/55

<sup>71</sup> J.G. Fichte, *Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, Band 1; Fichtes Werke herausgegeben von Immanuel Hermann Fichte; Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1971, pp. 424-425

<sup>72</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/17

That logic is to be lifted out of concrete relations in the world and made into an object of study in itself does not for Hegel consist of learning how to think, similar to that one does not have to study anatomy and physiology in order to learn how to digest or move about.<sup>73</sup>

Hegel regards the older logic and metaphysics as being a highly important source when it comes to the development of *WdL*, a development that is to be shown to come about through the immanent nature of the subject itself – or what is the same: it is to be shown in *its own necessary development*.<sup>74</sup> We will later go into what Hegel means by necessity, but the necessity which he speaks of here seems to have a necessary condition itself, namely the familiar forms of thought and the traditional metaphysics.

Philosophy in general at least used to deal with for example nature and God – objects which are considered to be concrete; objects which in the *Logic* are treated in their complete abstraction.<sup>75</sup> So when Hegel says that the *Logic* is to be understood as a system of pure thought, the realm of truth as it is without veil, exposed for itself, and that this content is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and finite spirit,<sup>76</sup> “God” must be considered in the most abstract way possible, if one is to remain within the considerations which properly fall within the *Logic*, i.e. it is not *a* god or *the* god of this or that religion.

While it is true that the attitude of the *Logic* is such that the thinker should be aware of the subjectivity involved in thinking and that this thinking then should be brought into relation with the object in such a way that the determination of the thought is received from the object and not the subject, Hegel states that subjective thought – our own innermost act – is such that it cannot set itself above or outside the relationship to the object, *but the object for us in its content can be nothing else than our concept of it*. Setting up an object outside of the subjective act of thinking, which the latter can then neither free itself from on the one hand nor never get in touch with on the other, is a confusion that arises when the categories are treated in isolation; the object which is supposed to be out of our reach *is only an object that is thought* – the thing in itself is an empty abstraction.<sup>77</sup>

The categories involved in the *Logic* are categories of the kind that express the most fundamental determinations of thought, but also categories, for instance causality, which we use as means in ordinary life in our thinking engagement with the world and could not do

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<sup>73</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/14

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 5/19

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 5/23

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 5/44

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 5/26

without, since we then would not be able to connect different phenomenon. Further, it is the categories whose exact determination cause so much confusion in philosophy. The purification of these categories and to raise them in the mind into freedom and truth is the higher task of the *Logic*.<sup>78</sup> Freedom here involves that one can move about in the categories without losing oneself, or rather find oneself again as the truth of the object – the movement from the objective to the subjective logic – with nothing remaining hidden for thought. This is done by a heightened awareness of what one actually does in thought, so as for instance not to set up abstractions like a thing in itself. An important element here is that Hegel regards self-knowledge to be a fundamental determination of the actuality<sup>79</sup> of spirit. In fact he states that this is the most important point about the nature of spirit; that which actuality consists of its knowledge of itself, since spirit is essentially consciousness. This is immediately present in the philosophizing human being that concerns itself with pure thought, since then the most real determination of oneself is the thought. Considering that spirit or consciousness then is what is most real of anything, knowing the truth, knowing what is actual, is not knowing this or that object of the world, but knowing oneself – *this is where actuality is found*. And this actuality is transparent since it is not an actuality that becomes what it is without spirit being involved; in fact, this actuality is essentially formed by spirit itself. This will be the model in which externality will be treated later in Hegel's system, where knowing what is external is transformed into being a part of the actuality of spirit; thinking in relation to externality means bringing the latter into actuality, since only something that is penetrated and saturated by thought is fully actual. Externality is treated as what is unreal, in opposition to the natural attitude in relation to propositional truth. Thought which has itself as an object in purity is to set itself in relation to itself in such a manner that what is over against is recognized as what it is in itself; this is the kind of truth which is being treated in the *Logic*, and truth is the aim of the *Logic*.<sup>80</sup> In the sense that self-knowledge is actuality, the logic moves within a realm of thinking that is to be such that a determination of thought also is a determination of reality; in this sense it is a sublation of the relation between thought and reality.

The Logic is different from other sciences in that no foreign element is involved in it; this gives it the possibility exhibiting of itself absolutely in its own necessary development.

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<sup>78</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/27

<sup>79</sup> In general "actuality" is used here to correspond to the concept developed by Hegel in the third part of the second book of *WdL*, *Die Wirklichkeit*, and Hegel's use of the word "wirklichkeit" elsewhere. It differs from "reality" in that "actuality" means *Erscheinung* of essence, while "reality" means the whole of what is real, as contrasted with what is ideal, or merely thought.

<sup>80</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/28

However, Hegel admits in the following passage that perfection when it comes to the exposition of the *Logic* must be dispensed with:

“Allein auf solche abstrakte Vollkommenheit der Darstellung muß freilich im allgemeinen Verzicht getan werden; schon indem die Wissenschaft mit dem rein Einfachen, hiermit dem Allgemeinen und Leersten anfangen muß, ließe der Vortrag nur eben diese selbst ganz einfachen Ausdrücke des Einfachen ohne allen weiteren Zusatz irgendeines Wortes zu; - was der Sache nach stattfinden dürfte, wären negierende Reflexionen, die das abzuhalten und zu entfernen sich bemühten, was sonst die Vorstellung oder ein unregelmäßiges Denken einmischen könnte.”<sup>81</sup>

Since the *Logic* begins with pure immediacy it seems that what follows from it would only be a continuous and simple repetition of being, never reaching any further determinations; in relation to anything, the only absolute truth possible to express would be: *it is*. This points us to a limit of the standpoint of speculation. If the *Logic* is the speculative core of Hegel’s system, and this core consists solely of a simplicity from which only the same follows, why does the *Logic* not consist in simple statements of *being* rather than the complex series of categories? One explanation can be that the *Logic* itself is dependant on external material, more specifically that of the older metaphysics. Another interpretation that I will pursue is that the speculative mode of thinking is itself dependant of the other modes, namely understanding, or *Verstand*, and negative reason or dialectics. A purely speculative science would have to limit itself to being. This will be treated in more detail in the next chapter.

Although formal logic were not by far as developed in Hegel’s time as it is now, I believe that his view on how formal logic relates to and differs from his own conception of logic is still to a certain extent valid; it should be obvious that when we here speak about “Hegel’s logic” it is not meant that it is a kind of logic that is peculiar to this man from the 19<sup>th</sup> century – its content should be taken to have universal significance. When “Hegel’s logic” is in consideration here, what is meant is the same as the *Logic*, or the universal thought forms as exhibited by Hegel mainly in *WdL* and *Enz*. Hegel’s *Logic* investigates the most fundamental concepts of reason and the relationship between them, and contains what is the main aspect of formal logic, namely an investigation of the conditions for valid arguments. Hegel’s logic therefore has a wider scope than formal logic.

Possibly the most striking difference that exists between Hegel’s logic and formal logic is that a part of Hegel’s logic, the objective logic, also includes what usually falls within

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 5/31

ontology. Subjective logic on the other hand includes the syllogism, or the formal thought operations, so modern formal logic would probably belong to the subjective logic for Hegel.

It is characteristic of formal logic that it separates content from form, and truth from certainty; although a valid argument guarantees truth preservation it does not guarantee certainty, since the premises are *givens*. Their truth-value may be decided within another argument, but since this structure repeats itself, one can never reach absolute certainty when it comes to specific conclusions, i.e. conclusions with a content, although certainty may be said to be possible in relation to purely formal matters. If the formal structures of thought are taken to be the only possible mode that thought may operate with if it is to remain within pure thought (for instance thought that has no empirical content), thinking needs external material in order to reach any truth other than formal truth, for instance a statement about objects or objective relations in the world. Such a split between thought and object easily leads to the problem that thought can never reach the thing as it is in itself; the thought-forms are *produced* by the subject, and it can never be known that these thought-forms really apply to objects as they are in themselves. Knowledge then soon lapses into opinion, as far as truth is considered as a matter of content together with certainty. That pure thought can *only* have such a formal character is in Hegel's view a prejudice that has its origin in ordinary consciousness; a prejudice that must be discarded before one enters philosophy.<sup>82</sup> For Hegel the ancient metaphysics held a higher conception of thinking than the one where thought remains only formal or outside of the real determinations of things in the world or reality as a whole. For the ancients, only knowledge of the things as far as they are known in thought counted as real knowledge, as opposed to for instance propositional truth, where truth is to be about the things in their immediacy as experienced or perceived, as something external, or in general as something stated about something.

We will now turn to the thing in itself, and how Hegel views knowledge in relation to it. The reason why the thing in itself is possible to know is that it has the form or *gestalt* of the self:

“Die reine Wissenschaft setzt somit die Befreiung von dem Gegensatz des Bewußtseins voraus. Sie enthält den *Gedanken*, insofern er *ebenso sehr die Sache an sich selbst ist*, oder *die Sache an sich selbst*, insofern sie *ebenso sehr der reine Gedanke ist*. Als Wissenschaft ist die Wahrheit das reine sich entwickelnde Selbstbewußtsein und hat die Gestalt des Selbsts, daß *das an und für sich Seiende gewußter Begriff, der Begriff als solcher aber das an und für sich Seiende ist*.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 5/37-38

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 5/43

Even though the thoughts in the *Logic* are forms they are far from being merely formal. They have a content; a content which is to be supplied by the thinking subject itself, and since there is no more than what the thinker supplies that is present, there is no thing in it itself present elsewhere, as for instance *behind* or as the ground of the matter that is considered in thought. In so far a thing in itself would be present it is only the self in a shape or form that is not recognized as it truly is. The self then is to be brought into a transparent relationship to itself, i.e. a true relationship to itself, in the sense of material truth – the concept of truth that is at hand in the *Logic*. The *Logic* is not about forms of thought that can be applied to a matter indifferently, in the sense of being *topic neutral*, and it is not about formal criteria of truth, as for instance the law of non-contradiction. It is to have a content of its own, such that it cannot be applied to some external matter in the same indifferent manner as formal logic can. In principle something absolutely external becomes nonsense within the *Logic*, since it would presuppose another determination of reality – a reality that can be outside of another. But this again presupposes the concept of reality, which is common to the two different realities treated. It is the sphere where reality is treated as something universal *überhaupt* that the *Logic* has its content; the conceptual sphere that cannot be avoided if one is to make a thoughtful statement on anything. But what, more precisely, is the content of the *Logic*? Hegel states it thus: “die notwendigen Formen und eigenen Bestimmungen des Denkens sind der Inhalt und die höchste Wahrheit selbst.”<sup>84</sup>

An important observation to make here is that this seems to go against what was said in the introduction, namely that the *Logic* can be applied differently than Hegel did. We can make an anticipation of the solution here in that although the *Logic* contains the fundamental determinations of reality, it can be applied and reapplied to the phenomenon – they are tools that can be used by thinking human beings in order to find themselves again within the shifting appearances. Fundamental determinations within reality may remain the same, while novelty is experienced in what appears. Hegel also makes a comment on the method which points to that it in principle is neutral and thus can be applied to anything indifferently: “die Methode ist das Bewußtsein über die Form der inneren Selbstbewegung ihres Inhalts. Ich habe in der *Phänomenologie des Geistes* ein Beispiel von dieser Methode an einem konkreteren Gegenstande, an dem *Bewußtsein*, aufgestellt.”<sup>85</sup> This seems to go against that the method is not distinct from the content that is treated; on the one hand it seems as if it is possible to use the method on this or that matter, and at the same time the method itself is not distinct from

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 5/44

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 5/49



different matters themselves. How can there then not be a different method according to what is treated? Again we can only make an anticipation here, which goes along the following lines: thought is what is real in the matters; the method itself can be known as it is in the *Logic*, and through the method what is real in the different matters comes to be revealed. What needs to be recognized is this:

“Das Einzige, um den wissenschaftlichen Fortgang zu gewinnen - und um dessen ganz einfache Einsicht sich wesentlich zu bemühen ist -, ist die Erkenntnis des logischen Satzes, daß das Negative ebensosehr positiv ist oder daß das sich Widersprechende sich nicht in Null, in das abstrakte Nichts auflöst, sondern wesentlich nur in die Negation seines *besonderen* Inhalts, oder daß eine solche Negation nicht alle Negation, sondern die *Negation der bestimmten Sache*, die sich auflöst, somit bestimmte Negation ist; daß also im Resultate wesentlich das enthalten ist, woraus es resultiert, - was eigentlich eine Tautologie ist, denn sonst wäre es ein Unmittelbares, nicht ein Resultat. Indem das Resultierende, die Negation, *bestimmte* Negation ist, hat sie einen *Inhalt*. Sie ist ein neuer Begriff, aber der höhere, reichere Begriff als der vorhergehende; denn sie ist um dessen Negation oder Entgegengesetztes reicher geworden, enthält ihn also, aber auch mehr als ihn, und ist die Einheit seiner und seines Entgegengesetzten. - In diesem Wege hat sich das System der Begriffe überhaupt zu bilden und in unaufhaltsamem, reinem, von außen nichts hereinnehmendem Gange sich zu vollenden.”<sup>86</sup>

The particulars that are present, the apparent negations of the universal determinations of thought, are revealed as really contained within thought – their essence is shown to be nothing more than what is determined in thought – this is the nature of scientific progress. An important remark is also that Hegel considers the method itself to be absolute, although it is capable of greater completeness and much elaboration in detail.<sup>87</sup> This, I believe, is due to that the method is not distinct from the matter that is treated in the *Logic*, and so it itself must also be dependant on the exposition, if it all were not to be grounded in assurances about what is really meant through what is being said – a problem that arises also within this that the exposition is said to be about the universal as it is in itself and at the same time nothing but the universal. If this were so, it is hard to make sense of the *changes* that Hegel makes in the different editions of *WdL*, and the differences that are present between for instance *WdL* and *Enz*. What can at best be said in a fair interpretation of Hegel’s statement on that the method itself is absolute is that no new exposition of the *Logic* can contradict anything that is essential in the *Logic*.

The exposition subject matter in the *Logic* in its immanent development is such that for instance the headings of the different chapters have come about through external reflection; the

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 5/49

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 5/49

headings only have a historical significance, in the sense that it is an ordering made after the development already is unfolded. In making the divisions it is presupposed that they are implicit in the matter itself, i.e. in the Concept<sup>88</sup> itself, which is nothing more than its own determination, such that the divisions that fall within it are not judgements about some object, but the Concepts own judgement about itself, which is the same as its determining of itself. Hegel contrasts this to how the different forms of triangles are not implicit in the concept of a triangle itself; it may be determined in this or that way on grounds that are external to the concept of a triangle while still remaining a triangle. The particular determinations of the Concept cannot be otherwise unless the Concept is something other than it itself is.

That which make the spontaneous progressive determinations of the Concept come about is the negative which it possesses within itself, which is the genuine dialectical element,<sup>89</sup> which is where *proof* belongs in Hegel's philosophy. As we saw, Fichte conceives the task of philosophy to determine the necessary ground for why anything is as it is, given that it can be both this way and another. Let us say that we have two possible fundamental determinations of how some essential nature of reality can be, namely A and not-A. A could be proved by giving a reason C, which also has its negation, meaning that there needs to be given a further reason for C, if we want to state that A is necessary. A solution to this might be that C or any further reason is self-evident. In that it is self-evident we have the problem that it is a kind ground for something that not everyone necessarily must see as self-evident, and demand further proof, since it is conceivable that it can be some other way. Objectivity then demands that any givens are to be rejected. The structure of Hegel's position here can be expressed as follows: in order to prove a given determination A, one goes about proving it through its negation, or its opposite, so that A implies not-A, which again implies A. By dialectics one goes from an assumption that A is the case, to the negation of A, implying that its opposite is the case, since there are only two possible determinations. But this other possible determination, not-A, which now is believed to be the case, is again showed not to be the case by dialectics, i.e. by assuming not-A, one moves back to A, by a double negation of A, and A was already known not to be the case. We are then left with an antinomy, and here we are back to the claim of Hegel that one needs to recognize the positive result that is hidden in such results as are given in an antinomy. At the same time what Hegel seems to mean by proof then can only be something that has a negative result; we can prove that things are neither this way nor the other. In order to get more

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<sup>88</sup> When "concept" is written with a capital c, what is meant is the same as Hegel's *Begriff*, which is treated in the third part of *WdL*, and means the *concept of a concept* in general.

<sup>89</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/51

out of it, one needs speculation, or the “trick” of *Aufhebung*, which then involves a suspension of belief in that the structure of reality is determined either this way or that, since one can recognize that the two possible determinations really were parts or abstractions of a larger, concrete determination of reality – one which has no opposite. This means that the A that is to be given as a result relating to its opposite through dialectics, is really something other than A; something C, that contains A and not-A as moments or aspects of itself.

Dialectics as it for instance appears in Plato’s dialogue *Parmenides* only has a negative result, but this result should be considered as belonging to the matter itself, just as the significance of Kant’s antinomies for Hegel is not that they display the limits of reason, but show that the objectivity or reason includes the necessity of contradiction since contradiction inhere in the determinations of thought.<sup>90</sup> The negative belong to the nature of the things themselves since thought is the nature of things and negativity belongs to the self-moving soul of the thought-determinations; if an advance is not made from the negative result, the consequence is that thought is incapable of reaching the infinite. For Hegel the true infinite is reason, so a consequence where negativity is the final result, really would involve that thought is incapable of reaching itself. A negative result in a discussion of a certain issue, negative in the sense that one cannot decide what the truth of the matter is, is a *finite* result; one that by itself only applies to that particular discussion. It is unwarranted to argue from such a result that reason is in all cases universally limited otherwise than by induction. Here we arrive at one of Hegel’s mature formulations of speculation: “In diesem Dialektischen, wie es hier genommen wird, und damit in dem Fassen des Entgegengesetzten in seiner Einheit oder des Positiven im Negativen besteht *das Spekulative*.”<sup>91</sup> Speculation consists in grasping the positive in the negative result of dialectics. *Proof* as far as dialectics is concerned involves isolating one of the movements involved, as for instance the one from A to not-A. An example of this is how Hegel sees *Parmenides* as giving a deduction of the many from the one.<sup>92</sup>

As far as as one remains within the realm of pure thought, the *Logic* will seem as something that is only for the subject; a system of thought quite possibly internally consistent and so on, but as a kind of knowledge that exists in the heads of thinkers alongside real matters in the world or reality in general, and for Hegel it is actually is so that only when the *Logic* is applied can it be seen that it is the universal truth, or that thought is the essential being of

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 5/52

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 5/52

<sup>92</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/174

reality.<sup>93</sup> *Application* here in the sense of *giving a material the shape of a self-developing whole*, as Hegel does in his lectures on history, art and religion. We can now see the meaning of the method emerge. It is not completely indifferent to the material, and while dependant on the content of the *Logic*, it can in principle be used in relation to other areas than those which are presented within Hegel's system.

It is in dwelling in the realm of shadows – *das Reich der Schatten* – of the *Logic* that the individual learns to move about freely in abstractions, and progresses within them without the help of sensuous material, which means that one develops the of power seeing the essential significance of the complexities of the particulars, such that they are included within what is universal; it is recognized that the universal that is comprehended in thought is not a particular standing alongside the other particularities of the world.<sup>94</sup> In this sense the *Logic* is also about *Bildung*; it develops the individual in such a way that it can recognize *thought* as the essential nature of *things*, which is to say that it can find itself again in the world, as its inside.

The *Logic* is divided into two main categories, the first is the *Concept as being*, which is the objective logic, and the *Concept as Concept*, which is the subjective logic. Hegel remarks that the objective logic corresponds to what Kant called the transcendental logic,<sup>95</sup> and the former or pre-critical metaphysics, which saw the fundamental determinations of reality in thoughts.<sup>96</sup> In this sense the objective logic is an ontology, consisting of the being and essence of things, but it also involves metaphysics in the sense of using abstractions received from *Vorstellung*, i.e. a figurative conception or imagination, as it for instance is displayed in art and religion. This explains Hegel's references to God throughout the *Logic*, and for instance how he can speak of dialectics as the soul of scientific knowledge.<sup>97</sup> In other words it allows abstractions from other fields of experience than the purely sensuous; in this sense Hegel is an empiricist, but more so perhaps than the usual empiricist, who gives limits to which fields of human experience that are valid when it comes to considerations of truth. At the same time these abstractions from spheres of experience must become purely abstract if they are to remain an element of the *Logic*; no sensuous element can remain. Since the former metaphysics involved more than pure thought, Hegel considers that they were justly accused of being uncritical in the sense of not investigating how far thoughts were capable of being

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<sup>93</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/55

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 5/55

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 5/59

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 5/61

<sup>97</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/173

determinations of the thing in itself or the reasonable.<sup>98</sup> Again, critique is to be immanent in the *Logic*.

The subjective logic is the logic of the Concept, or the logic of the essence which has become free; it sees itself as the truth of being and is self-subsistent, self-determining subjectivity – it is the logic of the self.<sup>99</sup> Here we can see the significance of the statement in *PhG*, where Hegel says that everything depends on understanding the true not only as substance (objective logic) but also as subject. Not much importance should be given to these characterizations of “subjective” and “objective” logic; the meaning these words have in ordinary use, where for instance “subjective” is taken to be what is arbitrary, will easily cause confusion. The subjectivity of the *Logic* is a kind of subjectivity that has come out of objectivity and keeps it within itself. The reconciliation and unity of self-conscious reason and the reason that *is* is the highest purpose of philosophy, a unity that necessarily must accord with reality as experienced, as far as experience is understood as that which recognizes what is actual as opposed to what is appearance or what is changing in an inessential manner, i.e. what is merely contingent and transient.<sup>100</sup> Experience of this kind only recognizes in *Dasein* partial actuality. Philosophical cognition grasps the same as such experience which sees beyond mere appearances, only in another form. Although on the one hand the transient reality is not held in high regard for Hegel, the principle of experience is.<sup>101</sup> This principle says that if anything is to be accepted it must be experienced in such a way that the content of the experience must be at one with the certainty of oneself; something is known not only because *I* have experienced it, but moreover because *I* have experienced what it *is*. This means that what I find as essential in myself I also find in the thing experienced, this is what is to be immediately present in its full extent in philosophy.

Speculative philosophy does not reject that anything that is in the intellect must have been in sense-experience, but equally affirms that there is nothing in sense-experience that has not been in the intellect, i.e. that is not conceptual. This can be seen in relation to the position that what is true in the objects, or their nature, is thought. For Hegel thinking constitutes the substance of external things, but is also the substance of spirit;<sup>102</sup> what is inner in external reality is the same as that which is inner in the knower – this is what makes knowledge possible, and this is what Hegel means in the most general sense when he says that nothing has

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<sup>98</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, pp. 5/61-62

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 5/62

<sup>100</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/47

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 8/49

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 8/82

been in sense-experience that has not been in the intellect, but in a deeper sense it is meant that everything has been in the spirit before it is in sense-experience, since spirit is the cause of the world.<sup>103</sup> I shall not try to make an interpretation of this statement here, since it would require a treatment of Hegel's concept of cause, and probably involve understanding what we experience in thinking in ordinary consciousness as something active, as a creative force.

But the question can still be raised: is there not a first – intellect or experience – at least for the single particular human being? As far as knowledge needs to be about something Hegel grants that experience is the first:

“Wenn die Vermittlung zur Bedingtheit gemacht und einseitig herausgehoben wird, so kann man sagen, aber es ist nicht viel damit gesagt, die Philosophie verdanke der Erfahrung (dem *Aposteriorischen*) ihre erste Entstehung - in der Tat ist das Denken wesentlich die Negation eines unmittelbar Vorhandenen -, so sehr als man das Essen den Nahrungsmitteln verdanke, denn ohne diese könnte man nicht essen; das Essen wird freilich in diesem Verhältnisse als undankbar vorgestellt, denn es ist das Verzehren desjenigen, dem es sich selbst verdanken soll. Das Denken ist in diesem Sinne nicht weniger undankbar.”<sup>104</sup>

Thinking is dependant on experience, but in the course of knowing the object's apparent self-subsistence is reduced to nought – if thinking then were to rest completely in experience it would dissolve itself as knowing as soon as the object was known. As mere appearance the object is a nullity; its identity as an object is something which is added by thought – experience that were to involve no thought would for Hegel be this mere appearance or insignificant manifoldness. In the same way that thinking is dependant on experience, philosophy is dependant on the empirical sciences – philosophy is to give the empirical sciences the shape of itself in the manner that was just developed, so that it becomes transparent, as for instance Hegel does in the philosophy of nature, or in *PhG*, where the experience of knowledge is given the shape of a development towards absolute knowing. Hegel describes this sort of philosophizing, when one gives a subject the shape of necessary development, as imitation of the activity of thinking that is original and completely independent:

“Indem die Philosophie so ihre Entwicklung den empirischen Wissenschaften verdankt, gibt sie deren Inhalte die wesentlichste Gestalt der *Freiheit* (des *Apriorischen*) des Denkens und die *Bewährung* der *Notwendigkeit*, statt der Beglaubigung des Vorfindens und der erfahrenen Tatsache, daß die Tatsache zur Darstellung und Nachbildung der ursprünglichen und vollkommen selbständigen Tätigkeit des Denkens werde.”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 8/82

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., pp. 8/56-57

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 8/58

This is also how Hegel conceives of the relations between the different philosophies, as treated in the philosophy of history. It might at first seem that due to the diversity of the different philosophies there can be no single one that is true – of course this means setting up a universal truth that is to apply to all philosophies, which is problematic in that it also states the opposite of what is intended, in a similar way as we have seen before (“for all philosophies there is no one philosophy” which means: “it is true for all philosophies that there is nothing which is true for all of them”, i.e. a contradiction). Taken as an abstraction, as something *opposed* to the particular, the universal becomes itself a particular; one that stands side by side with other particulars – here we have an example of dialectics. True universality, or speculative universality, is to contain the particular within its own determination. When the universal is conceived thus, we can understand the particular philosophies as stages or moments of a whole; expressing relative truths, but nonetheless truths, since the relative status and the specific determination of the particulars are an essential part of universal truth. This understanding of the relationship between “different truths” gives rise to the analogy in *PhG* where the blossom of a bud “refutes” the bud.<sup>106</sup> The refutation of each other that is implicit in every philosophy that is to be universal is to be seen in the light of the *Logic* as a development of their inner connectedness, and then one cannot reject philosophy on a whole on the ground that it is an aggregate of different opinions and not the truth as such, if one in principle also would not want to eat apples or oranges when one wants fruit, since apples and oranges are not fruit as such.<sup>107</sup>

Hegel rejects that doing philosophy without a system can be scientific; such philosophy will be an expression of subjective disposition, and hence contingent – one might just as well take the opposite of the expressed view as the truth; it might at best be a system of opinions, but a system of a kind where the particulars are simply put in one place together, and one could exchange the different ones as one pleases or when one happens to change one's mind. He even rejects that a system can be understood as something built on a specific principle, in opposition to others, since genuine philosophy is to contain all particular principles within itself.<sup>108</sup> The universal that contains the particular principles which everything else in is to be understood in the light of is the one that is exposed in the *Logic*, and every kind of philosophy that Hegel develops, whether it be philosophy of history, philosophy of right or phenomenology, is dependant on his original and self-determining thinking that is the *Logic*.

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<sup>106</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/12

<sup>107</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/59

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 8/60

§8 of *Enz.* states that everything that is in consciousness is experienced, and certain objects present themselves that are at least not part of sense-experience, for instance freedom, spirit and God. Understanding these other spheres of experience is part of what it means to be satisfied as a thinker. Moreover, for Hegel, subjective reason, or thought as we experience it as produced by ourselves in thinking, can only be satisfied when a content is given the form of necessity, and when the universal and particular are treated as external to each other, a treatment of both starts from presuppositions that cannot give satisfaction, i.e. no necessity connecting the two can be reached. A satisfaction is to be given by *Nachdenken* or speculative thinking, which has for its universal the Concept.<sup>109</sup> In the *Logic* thought develops itself by its own means and reaches internal satisfaction, and a knower, in order to reach satisfaction in relation to external material must give it the shape of coming forth freely; a coming forth which happens in accordance with the necessity of matter itself alone. Spinoza says the following about freedom: “That thing is said to be free (*libera*) which exists by the mere necessity of its own nature and is determined in its actions by itself alone.”<sup>110</sup> Freedom is here seen in intimate relation to necessity. In thought one is free, but can also only be satisfied with what is necessary; necessity in the sense of the immanent development of something. One should keep in mind that we are here dealing with things that do not have as their fundamental determination that they exist either here or there in space, but nonetheless with things that are actual. When explaining the actuality of something as coming about from the nature of the matter itself, it can be given the shape of necessity, a shape that requires both an explanation of how it is in its fundamental determinations and that they change in accordance with the inner nature of the matter in itself. Desire for Hegel is really desire for oneself, and hence real satisfaction of desire can only be achieved by understanding the objects as in itself oneself – that is as thought, since the self in its own determinations is fundamentally thought; true satisfaction can also only be achieved when externality is actually present, i.e. when it is not only a thought – this is the case for Hegel since freedom requires that one be at home in what is other than oneself. In thought one is immediately at home with oneself, since what is over against oneself is always in the form of thought; it would seem that an explanation of why a transcendence of form is required in order to achieve freedom, since otherwise full satisfaction or the realization of freedom need only consist of dwelling in pure thought. This is a hard question to decide, but at least we can see that Hegel gives satisfaction as an ultimate justification for philosophy, a theme also from *Differenz.* where “the need (*Bedürfnis*) for

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 8/52

<sup>110</sup> B. de Spinoza, *Ethic*, (trans. A Boyle), J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 1910, p. 2



philosophy”<sup>111</sup> is treated; an expression with the ambiguity of on the one hand meaning that philosophy is needed at the time and on the other implying a statement on what philosophy needs. A further and similar ambiguity is also present in a justification of philosophy which claims that philosophy is both a means and an end – it can both be used in relation to other matters, while at the same time theoretical activity can be seen as the highest expression of what it means to be a human being. Hegel can of course mean that philosophy is justified in that it satisfies in both of these senses.

In short it can be said that the *Logic* has two sides to it, the logical on the one hand and the ontological on the other. The logical side involves the identification of the basic categories of thought, and the ontological side involves determining what being is. These two sides run alongside each other in that in the *Logic* a split between thought and being is not regarded as primary, *since the categories are implicit in being as it is*.

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<sup>111</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Differenzschrift*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 2/20

#### IV. THE MODES OF THOUGHT: VERSTAND, DIALECTICS AND SPECULATION

In *Enz.* §79-82 Hegel describes something that can be treated as useful conceptual tools when understood as different modes of thinking, although these modes of thought should not be taken in the isolation that the headline implies; these three modes constitute different kinds of thinking that imitate the three different moments of everything logically real.<sup>112</sup> In fact, when they are treated apart from each other then they are considered within the mode of *Verstand* or understanding; that they are different modes of thought should also not be understood abstractly – the modes of thought are not subjective forms that can be applied to different matters indifferently, rather they should be understood as objective modes of thought that express the real as it is, in accordance with Hegel's philosophy in general where what is most real in things are thoughts. We will begin this treatment with understanding and move to dialectics and speculation, following Hegel's own separation of the material, and end with a discussion of the *Aufhebung* and its relation to immanent necessity.

##### **Understanding or *Verstand***

In general understanding is the same as reflection. It is a mode of thought that is characterized by abstraction, and keeping the abstracted elements under consideration fixed in their separation,<sup>113</sup> counting it as something that subsists on its own account – it is something that simply *is*.<sup>114</sup> This element that subsists on its own account is the universal; understanding posites everything it takes as real as something universal. In this sense everything then comes to involve a contradiction, since all things are universals but also particulars; and in that understanding treats everything it understands as real in the world, that which it finds clear and distinct, as something universal in that it is something that subsists on its own account – but everything in the world is also a particular. Understanding is ignorant of this problem. At the same time the concept of universality that understanding involves is the one where the universal is put in opposition to the particular in such a way that itself really becomes a particular alongside other particulars.

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<sup>112</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/168

<sup>113</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/38

<sup>114</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/169

This is the kind of thinking that is attacked when one states that thinking is something dead, incapable of grasping the real content of life which is more properly grasped in intuition and feeling. But Hegel balances this view claiming that it is due to understanding that we are capable of beginning to treat anything in thought at all, since that involves abstraction and viewing things in their isolation, i.e. their determinacy – it is due to that understanding that we can treat something as *this* and *not that*; the principle of the understanding is thus that of identity. Philosophy is fully dependant of understanding for Hegel, since it above all requires: “daß ein jeder Gedanke in seiner vollen Präzision aufgefaßt wird und daß man es nicht bei Vagem und Unbestimmtem bewenden läßt.”<sup>115</sup>

In theory it is understanding which identifies the laws, the principles, the different forces at work, and so on. Without it one would never be able to single out any determination of the manifoldness and think about it, so as to reveal how it really is; if it were not for understanding, any abstraction would dissolve itself as soon as it was made. Hegel quotes Goethe when the relevance of the understanding is to be pointed out in relation to the practical sphere: someone who wants to do great things must know how to limit himself.<sup>116</sup> If one is to accomplish something great, the activity that leads to that goal must be isolated and pursued without distraction, otherwise one would never reach it, and if one were to try to do everything at once, nothing would get done.

Hegel compares understanding to the goodness of God, which allows finite things to really subsist on their own. This goes against understanding Hegel as a onesided idealist, for which finite things have no reality of their own.

Hegelians have a tendency to treat understanding as something that should be avoided, but as we have seen, Hegel in fact sees it as something indispensable. The results of the understanding not to be avoided, rather one needs to go deeper into them:

”Die Tätigkeit des Scheidens ist die Kraft und Arbeit des *Verstandes*, der verwundersamsten und größten oder vielmehr der absoluten Macht. Der Kreis, der in sich geschlossen ruht und als Substanz seine Momente hält, ist das unmittelbare und darum nicht verwundersame Verhältnis. Aber daß das von seinem Umfange getrennte Akzidentelle als solches, das Gebundene und nur in seinem Zusammenhange mit anderem Wirkliche ein eigenes Dasein und abgesonderte Freiheit gewinnt, ist die ungeheure Macht des Negativen; es ist die Energie des Denkens, des reinen Ichs. Der Tod, wenn wir jene Unwirklichkeit so nennen wollen, ist das Furchtbarste, und das Tote festzuhalten das, was die größte Kraft erfordert. Die kraftlose Schönheit haßt den Verstand, weil er ihr dies zumutet, was sie nicht vermag. Aber nicht das Leben, das sich vor dem Tode scheut und von der Verwüstung rein bewahrt, sondern das ihn erträgt und in ihm sich erhält, ist das

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 8/171

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 8/170

Leben des Geistes. Er gewinnt seine Wahrheit nur, indem er in der absoluten Zerrissenheit sich selbst findet. Diese Macht ist er nicht als das Positive, welches von dem Negativen wegsieht, wie wenn wir von etwas sagen, dies ist nichts oder falsch, und nun, damit fertig, davon weg zu irgend etwas anderem übergehen; sondern er ist diese Macht nur, indem er dem Negativen ins Angesicht schaut, bei ihm verweilt. Dieses Verweilen ist die Zauberkraft, die es in das Sein umkehrt. - Sie ist dasselbe, was oben das Subjekt genannt worden, welches darin, daß es der Bestimmtheit in seinem Elemente Dasein gibt, die abstrakte, d. h. nur überhaupt *seiende* Unmittelbarkeit aufhebt und dadurch die wahrhafte Substanz ist, das Sein oder die Unmittelbarkeit, welche nicht die Vermittlung außer ihr hat, sondern diese selbst ist.“<sup>117</sup>

We owe our freedom to the understanding – it is in thinking that one begins to isolate oneself as a being existing solely through itself, ”... denn der Verstand ist das Denken, das reine Ich überhaupt.“<sup>118</sup>

It might be tempting to read the ordering of the list of the modes of thought in relation to the ordering of the *Logic* itself, so that understanding corresponds to Being, dialectics to Essence and speculation to the Concept. John W. Burbidge considers this, and rejects it on the grounds that *being* is a concept that is almost the exact opposite of understanding, since it is indeterminate, lacking any distinctions and divisions.<sup>119</sup> I believe this view to be mistaken. From what has been said Hegel thinks that there cannot be any philosophy without understanding; it might be said that philosophy in the *Logic* has a relative beginning in relation to *PhG* which then is taken to be the realm of understanding. The reading of *PhG* which I have proposed here is such that it has a negative result, and the content of the *Logic* does not involve any material that is taken from *PhG*; when it comes to dialectics and speculation it always involves determinations already fixed by understanding. So, keeping in mind the quotation from *PhG* above, that self-movement can only come about through separation, I believe the *Logic* must be read as beginning with understanding. How does this relate to that being is to be indeterminacy as such? If we look at what actually happens in the *Logic*, I believe it is not hard to see that Hegel here represents the workings of understanding.

”*Sein, reines Sein*, - ohne alle weitere Bestimmung. In seiner unbestimmten Unmittelbarkeit ist es nur sich selbst gleich und auch nicht ungleich gegen Anderes, hat keine Verschiedenheit innerhalb seiner noch nach außen. Durch irgendeine Bestimmung oder Inhalt, der in ihm unterschieden oder wodurch es als unterschieden von einem Anderen gesetzt würde, würde es nicht in seiner Reinheit festgehalten.“<sup>120</sup>

<sup>117</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/36

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 3/20

<sup>119</sup> John W. Burbidge, *Hegel on Logic and Religion*, State University Press of New York 1992, p. 6

<sup>120</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/82

Being is that which is only equal to itself – here we can see the principle of identity coming first, and is evidence of the workings of understanding. One tries to think of that which is common to all things as ruled by the principle of identity. If one does not attempt to make a clear and distinct determination of *being*, the movement into nothing would never come about. One could be satisfied with vague and obscure utterings, “Sein, reines Sein” over and over again. Being is also considered to be the pure abstraction,<sup>121</sup> and abstraction is the working of understanding. In the grounds of this I reject Burbidge’s attempt at viewing the *Logic* as ordered by the modes of thought. Since Burbidge rejects that understanding corresponds to the logic of being, and that he views the logic of essence to be of the place reflection, he places the treatment of understanding in the logic of the Concept or the Idea. On this issue I agree with Stephen Houlgate, who points out that the syllogism would be the proper correspondent to and understanding mode of reason in the logic of the Concept, but that the logic of the Concept also ends with the absolute idea, where dialectics is treated as a moment of speculative reason, and all of these moments must be viewed as sides of the logically real.<sup>122</sup> However we will return later to Burbidge’s claim that understanding is the highest achievement of the *Logic* as a whole.

## Dialectics

In dialectics the elements isolated by understanding sublate themselves as finite; they turn into their opposite, as for instance is the case with the universal that is put side by side with the particular. Dialectics should not be confused with sophistry, which for Hegel really is about making abstractions valid in their isolation,<sup>123</sup> i.e. giving them out to be concrete, or representing more than they really are. If the result of dialectics is taken only as negative one has scepticism – since I fail in trying to understand the thing, it cannot be known. A sceptic could claim that since the universal turns out to be a particular, we cannot really know what the universal is in itself. Dialectics should not be confused with subjective argument that goes back and forth and never reaches an end. Dialectics in this sense is often understood as a consciously misleading argument and an attempt at producing confusion; trying to show contradictions which really are not there. Positively it could be the attempt at showing how one should *not* conceive of

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<sup>121</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/186

<sup>122</sup> Stephen Houlgate *A Reply to John Burbidge*, In: George di Giovanni, *Essays on Hegel’s Logic*, State University of New York Press, 1990

<sup>123</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/173

something; the contradictions that arise are an illusion due to improper use of concepts, and if one are to understand the concept in its proper determination one should conceive of it as it is done in understanding. This usually amounts to restating the proposition that dialectics began with, but with the assurance that this is the true determination; however it then really rests on the assurance, and not on the determination of the concept itself, which for Hegel is to be self-sublating, or self-moving, showing that the finite is not what is true in and for itself. This self-transcending, or moving out of the fixed determination that the concept has received through understanding, is for Hegel an *immanent* transcending – it happens due to the nature of the thought determination itself. In such a way dialectics is the sole which is that principle through which immanent coherence and necessity enters into science; it is the nonexternal elevation above the finite, which reveals what is true in it, namely the infinite, or reason in general.<sup>124</sup> The method can then be seen to live in dialectics,<sup>125</sup> since here the matter itself is immanently developed.

Reflection does transcend the fixed determinations of understanding according to Hegel,<sup>126</sup> but the relation between determinations remain something posited externally. An example of this would be the thought that freedom must also have a relation to necessity, since without necessity freedom would be equal to arbitrariness.

In ordinary consciousness dialectics is the mode of cognition which understands that to determine the truth of something is not a matter of deciding either/or but both/and; which is to say that also either/or must be given a limited validity, if one is to remain true to the principle. This principle is also expressed in practical affairs as fairness according to the proverb: live and let live. For Hegel it is also so that the finite is not restricted from something that comes from the outside; dialectics can be used to interpret change as coming from what is immanent in external life itself, as for instance when one does not understand man as having two properties – alive but also mortal – but such that the property of being alive implies that one is to die. Death is a revelation of the inner contradiction of life, which seems to be self-subsisting, but perishes since everything finite is in contradiction with itself, being both particular and universal.

Hegel holds that Kant was the one who in modern times reinstated dialectics in its place of honour with his treatment of the antinomies,<sup>127</sup> but for Hegel they are deficient in that they

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 8/173

<sup>125</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/53

<sup>126</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/172

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 8/174

go from one determination to the other in a subjective manner; an understanding of determinations as immanently turning into their opposite is not reached – dialectics are not understood in its objective significance. In an objective sense dialectics corresponds to God's might, which is to say that the true universal reveals itself in that any finite determination is shown not to be able to subsist on its own; the true universal is neither this nor that.

Again this mode of thought represents also the objective side of things, both theoretically and practically, real and ideal. In the natural world it is present in motion; something is there, but as something moving it has in the potential of being somewhere else. When it is given a position as being here and not there a more abstract determination is given primacy, whereas for a moving thing its determination of being something moving really is primary – its being here or there is secondary. Giving it a determination of being here and not there and making this primary, involves turning it into the opposite of what it is by means of abstraction, i.e. as something standing still and not moving. This gives rise to the paradoxes of Zeno. Theoretically this is present in abundance in the *Logic*, as for instance the dialectics of being and nothing, something and other, etc., and in *Parmenides* in the dialectics of the one and the many. In practical life Hegel gives examples of this expressed in proverbs of the kind: pride goes before fall.<sup>128</sup>

## Speculation

We can now look at Hegel's mature formulation of speculation. In *Enz.* it is also called the positively rational, and in short it "faßt die Einheit der Bestimmungen in ihrer Entgegensetzung auf, das *Affirmative*, das in ihrer Auflösung und ihrem Übergehen enthalten ist."<sup>129</sup> In addition to this it has three more characteristics. Firstly, it treats the result of dialectics not only as negative, but since it is a mediated negative it is seen to have content; in speculation one becomes aware of this. Secondly, the result is grasped as something concrete, that is, as a unity of determinations that at least seem at first to have a distinct meaning on their own. The unity that is seen in speculation is not a formal unity, and not simply an abstraction. Thirdly, the logic of understanding is contained within speculation – if one abstracts the dialectical and speculative element one is left with what is usually called logic.

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 8/175

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 8/176

Since speculation ought to transcend what is merely subjective in thought and include what is objective, expressions like “the Absolute is the unity of the subjective and the objective” falls short although it is also in a sense correct – it is the one-sidedness that is the problem. The emphasis is it put on the unity, while in truth the subjective and objective are also distinct. Since understanding is the common mode of thinking, speculation is often seen as something that tries to grasp the unity in a one-sided manner, but this is so since understanding already has stressed the distinction.

In the *Zusatz* to the description of speculation in *Enz.* Hegel mentions that the content of speculation is equal to what in religious consciousness often is called the “mystical” – not understood as something impenetrable or incomprehensible, but as that which is a revelation of truth as it is in itself. Hegel goes so far as to say that everything rational can be called mystical, but adds that with this nothing more is said than that the rational transcends understanding.<sup>130</sup> The mystical has in common with the speculative that it does not give finitude an infinite significance; determinations grasped through understanding or based on the principle of abstract identity as fundamental will only see the mystical as something mysterious, as superstition and deception, since those determinations that count as true for understanding in their isolation, in the mystical experience are seen as a concrete unity where the determinations are seen as something *ideal*.

We see here that Hegel has incorporated speculation in a systematic whole, and put it in relation with dialectics and understanding, so that what earlier seemed confusing about speculation has become clear. Yet we have to answer what seems like one of the hardest issues in Hegel’s philosophy, namely that of the *Aufhebung*. How does the *Aufhebung* come about? How does dialectics move from a negative result to a positive one? And specifically: how does this relate to the immanent necessity of the matter? In order to answer this in a non-abstract way, we will have to enter into the matter itself. This will be done in the next chapter.

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 8/179



## V. AUFHEBUNG AND THE OBJECTIVE LOGIC

The first book of *WdL* contains the logic of being and essence, which taken as a whole is called the objective logic. The logic of being is such that there is not yet any clear distinction between any existent thing and the thought of it; such a distinction cannot at first be taken for granted as *the* most fundamental characteristic of reality; *being* applies both to thought *and* to any existent thing. A thought *is*, and so it has something in common with any existent thing. Such an understanding of the category of being, in which both thought and existent things belong in virtue of being fundamentally characterized as something that *is*, is the category which the *Logic* begins with.

*Identifying* anything within the sphere ruled by the category of being, means treating it as something immediately determined within the manifold of appearances, while there has not been made any distinction between mere appearance and appearance of something essential, or *Wesen*. Immediately this manifold is present as a whole, as being in general. In the *Logic* the category of *Dasein* or determinate being is then developed through the category of being itself, which then becomes the ground for identifying single things within the manifold as this and not that, something that involves determining something as a quality. The negation of something identified as one quality as opposed to another means that the quality is replaced by a new quality – there are no relations between qualities present here, rather the different qualities are indifferent to each other, while still opposed in the sense that they are possible to differentiate between. This is different from negation within the sphere of essence, where a negation of something gives its direct opposite, when for instance the negation of essential is inessential.

Things treated within this logic are things that apparently are purely and simply what they are *as* they are, i.e. they are characterized by being given, which means that there is nothing more to the things than what is immediate. As was noticed above, there actually can be made no sense within the sphere of being to things only *appearing* to be this or that, which means that thought is not present as making distinctions between something that is and something that is merely thought, and this moreover implies that what we have to do with here is a sphere more characterized by intuition or *Anschauung* than of thought.

We will now look at certain aspects of the movements or developments of concepts as they are done in the *Logic*. First we will treat the logic of being, and look directly into the development of its relation to nothing and becoming, and especially the relation of being and nothing to becoming when the latter is an *Aufhebung* of the former. Then follows a treatment of the logic of essence.

## Being

We will now turn to the actual content of the *Logic*, and focus on issues regarding whether we here have to do with a long, coherent and convincing argument, or with a kind of “interpretation” of concepts. We will also look into Hegel’s claim about the system as a necessary development – what is the meaning of *necessity* in relation to the *Logic*?

Charles Taylor writes:

“The *Logic* is in fact, once we set aside the *PhG*, the only strict, self-authenticating dialectic of Hegel’s system. That is why it has to be presupposed in the philosophies of nature and spirit. On it the claim of Hegel to have grounded his vision in strict argument stands or falls.”<sup>131</sup>

In other words, it is then the most essential to criticize, if one is to find out if the system is sound on a whole.

One way to conceive this difficulty is to distinguish between what is sound by argument and what is sound as an interpretation, i.e. as *suggestive interpretation*. Taylor holds that Hegel only establishes his most important truths by interpretation, while failing to make them sound true by strict argument. What is the meaning of “strict argument” for Hegel? Taylor is very much aware that Hegel tries to reach truth by dialectics and speculative reason; and by being aware that the true is the whole, it seems rather strange to state that since one part of the *Logic*, however small or large, fails, it fails as a whole, when failure or success really is dependant on the whole, such that one can really only become aware of the true meaning of the parts when the whole is present, and *present as a whole*. For Hegel the whole is present immediately and concretely as consciousness – or as the I that is aware of itself, as we shall see in the last chapter – so discovering the truth would then be the discovering of oneself. Because of this we have the criteria of truth already within ourselves. Along these lines Hegel will move in an investigation of truth, and it might well be true that Hegel fails by strict argument in the way Taylor sees it, but this might not be what Hegel sets out to do in the first place.

But then again, I think Taylor points at something that is most significant, namely problems regarding transition; the *Aufhebung* – the movement which finds the unity within difference. Where dialectical understanding becomes speculative reason, where the limit of knowledge as presented by Kant is transcended, where the antinomies are resolved.

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<sup>131</sup> Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, Cambridge University Press 1975, p. 221

Taylor seems to accept the dialectic of being and nothing which Hegel presents, where each of these notions turn into their opposite and one really cannot hold on to either as separate when investigated closely. The problem arises with the move to the notion of becoming. Taylor cannot accept this transition as a strict conceptual proof; even though what Hegel says may be a persuasive interpretation, we are not dealing with a real, sound argument.

Taylor gives an interpretation of the transition to becoming that immediately seems interesting. Could it be that Hegel thinks that the *Aufhebung*, when speaking of being and nothing, comes from how one in thought continually moves from the one to the other, from being to nothing and back again? Taylor writes:

“Thus, in this case, the notion of becoming imposes itself supposedly because of the passage from Being to Nothing and back; but this is a passage which our thought is forced to when we contemplate either. Of course, as we know, this distinction between thought and reality is ultimately untenable; but we can not trade on this principle at this stage.”<sup>132</sup>

As we see, the question about the identity of thought and being is raised once again, and as I see it we are presented with two options when it comes to understanding the transition to becoming. The first is that we settle with it as being only an interpretation of how we can understand the relation between these two notions. This would also be to concede to that the *Logic* fails as strict argument. The second is that we could look into our own thinking activity when contemplating being and nothing, to see if and how there could be a unity in becoming, as Hegel claims there is, involving an explication of the meaning of becoming as *imposing itself*, as stated in the above quote.

What does the first option involve? Since we are always *moving* in between being and nothing, we can interpret the movement itself as what it is ultimately all about when it comes to the relation between being and nothing. For Taylor, *even if* this holds, it does not show that this relation holds universally as an ontological claim. This is however not what I think Hegel is after at this point; he only wants to establish this relationship conceptually. Taylor does not state exactly *how* Hegel fails; he leaves us with: “But of course as probative arguments these passages are unconvincing.”<sup>133</sup> Taylor leaves us asking: why? What is more, we must ask: what is meant by a strict argument? What would have to be the case, if Hegel were to be convincing by strict argument?

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 233

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

It should be clear that Hegel does not mean by logic “those rules of inference which are truth-preserving.”<sup>134</sup> Truth is not the relation between mere facts – truth is where there is identity within difference which is to be found only within speculative reason. To demystify it somewhat, one can see truth as the identity between subject and object, which to some extent may pass as a common sense understanding of truth. Subject and object are known to be radically different – a basic difference within reality. Truth is the identity of subject and object; it is the identity of the *knower* with the *known* – truth is *knowing* – and in the knowing we have the identity of that which is also different from each other – subject and object. Hegel does not present a strict argument in the sense of a formal deduction, or even induction (which itself might lie behind a claim of Hegel’s reasoning really being suggestive interpretation).

This leads us to the second option; we have to give a definite sense to how the transition from being and nothing to becoming is more than interpretation. On the one hand it is a matter of the identity of subject and object as a question of knowledge, and on the other it is a question of the unity of opposites in a third – each being a kind of inquiry into *identity within difference*. Central to reaching this identity within difference, the speculative level of reason, is the *Aufhebung*. What is the *Aufhebung*? It is at least a notoriously difficult part of Hegel’s philosophy, and it is here that most, if not just about everyone, leaves Hegel alone. Generally speaking, *Aufhebung* is the unification of opposites. For Hegel this unification is also supposed to be a necessary transition. Michael Forster has given the following suggestion when it comes to understanding the necessity of the transition:

“[...] this category’s unifying a given pair of mutually implying contrary categories by, in a sense, preserving while, in a sense, abolishing them, thereby eliminating their self-contradictoriness, and being the one known category that does so while remaining the closest to them in conceptual content.”<sup>135</sup>

The question is then raised if a statement of necessity is meaningful in relation to *Aufhebung* – how could something be necessary by being simply that which is *known* at a particular time? Would the transition cease to be necessary if we were to find a category that is closer to the unified moments in conceptual content? Forster suggests that we understand it as the category which is the maximal proximity *simpliciter* – but then again, how would we know when that is obtained? Forster also suggests on a possible solution, where the transition does not add any new conceptual content, but also correctly recognizes that this has little plausibility as a faithful

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<sup>134</sup> See Terry Pinkard, “A Reply to David Duquette”, In: George di Giovanni, *Essays on Hegel’s Logic*, State University of New York Press 1990

<sup>135</sup> Michael Forster, “Hegel’s dialectical method”, In: Fredrick C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 148

interpretation of Hegel –in speculative reason we would only have a restatement of the content of dialectical reason and no real transition and unification – we would simply stand outside the matter at hand, stating a formal unity in another, as an analytical claim. Though Forster sees the necessity of the transition as vital to what Hegel wants his philosophy to be, he is happy with the definition he has given, since it is all that Hegel would require from a transition “in order for his dialectical method to accomplish the philosophical functions it was designed to serve ...”,<sup>136</sup> which Forster gives as a set of functions, divided into three classes: pedagogical, epistemological and scientific. But it seems hard to understand that the question of necessity would not arise again within at least the two latter classes, and this also seems to reduce Hegel’s claim of necessity to a set of external considerations; the transition would be necessary because it yields what Hegel wishes it to do. Considering Hegel’s own claims when it comes to necessity, we can see that this does Hegel wrong – the necessity should in an important sense be immanent.

What then, does Hegel mean by *Aufhebung*? He comments this expression in the *Logic* in a remark:

“*Aufheben* und das *Aufgehobene* (das *Ideelle*) ist einer der wichtigsten Begriffe der Philosophie, eine Grundbestimmung, die schlechthin allenthalben wiederkehrt, deren Sinn bestimmt aufzufassen und besonders vom Nichts zu unterscheiden ist. - Was sich aufhebt, wird dadurch nicht zu Nichts. Nichts ist das *Unmittelbare*; ein Aufgehobenes dagegen ist ein *Vermitteltes*, es ist das Nichtseiende, aber als *Resultat*, das von einem Sein ausgegangen ist; es hat daher die *Bestimmtheit*, aus der es herkommt, noch an sich”.<sup>137</sup>

The point about the *Aufhebung* being something different from *Nichts*, is that of the determinate negation; a double negation which does not return to a simple opposite, but as a negation which results in a definite content. It is a negation of opposition in general, a negation working upon itself – it cancels itself out, but also retains something from this canceling activity – we have to remember that we are not dealing with a mere analysis, but thinking’s self-thinking, or speculative thought. Based on the description Hegel gives of speculation in *Enz.*,<sup>138</sup> I will propose the following characteristics as being those which will satisfy Hegel’s own standard when treating becoming – *Werden* – as the speculative unity of being and nothing – becoming as an *Aufhebung* of being and nothing must involve:

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 149

<sup>137</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/113-114

<sup>138</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, pp. 8/176-178

1. The apprehension of the affirmative unity of the terms being and nothing which is involved in their disintegration and transition.
2. The unity of being and nothing must have a definitive content, since the unification is a result and only involves a negation of the terms as isolated abstractions.
3. A thought that though abstract is also concrete, not as a simple and formal unity, but a unity of different determinations.
4. A thought that can be reduced to a formal law of thought, by eliminating its dialectical and speculative element.

In addition to this we have the claim of necessity – a claim that is important if the *Logic* is to be understood more in the direction of a strict argument, than as an interpretation of concepts. Necessity implies objectivity, and so anything necessary should in principle be accessible to everyone – if the truth, available through the *Aufhebung* where speculation is reached, is not available to everyone, how can it be necessary? This is similar to the problems surrounding Fichte and intellectual intuition. We should keep in mind that for Hegel, a real philosophical *refutation* is reducing a particular philosophy to a constituent member of a higher form<sup>139</sup> – Hegel naturally has a view of what an argument is which fits in with the rest of his philosophy – the same goes for his understanding of necessity.

We find that for Hegel necessity really has three moments: the condition, the fact or outcome, and the activity.<sup>140</sup> The condition is the external circumstance which exists prior to the fact – the fact being that which is to be realized, which is also understood to be something prior. The condition is also passive in the sense of being material for the realization of the fact – and as such it already contains the fact, although only as potential. Through the presupposed condition the fact becomes realized, but this again only happens through *activity*. Activity is something that exists independantly, but is also only possible as real activity where there is a condition and something to be realized. The activity is the movement which makes a real fact out of the condition. This comes about through an *Aufhebung*<sup>141</sup> of the existence of the condition resulting in the existence of the fact. Errol E. Harris has given the following explication of the moment of activity involved in necessity:

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 8/192

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 8/293

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 8/292

“The activity is the process or agency which brings the fact into existence by converting the conditions into actuality. It is (or can be) an independent self-subsisting being, a man or his character (his will), yet the possibility of its action is resident only in the conditions and their relation to the result.”<sup>142</sup>

It could seem like the *Aufhebung* itself is hidden within the notion of necessity, which would imply that we really have not come any closer to understanding what Hegel means by necessity. Harris also uses the word *sublation* within the description itself when describing necessity: “True necessity, on the other hand, is the complete and coherent system, which sublates the totality of conditions.”<sup>143</sup> In fact, when describing the transition one usually seems to get stuck with descriptions of it as a process, as something that has to do with force in one sense or another, or simply that the one *becomes* the other; difference becomes unity – but where is the necessity here? And where is the thinking subject? Is it so that there is an objective order to everything which imposes itself on the thinking subject from outside of it? Hegel deals with this attitude to thought in the *Vorrede in Enz.*, and while recognizing it as belonging to the true attitude of the philosopher, we must remind ourselves that Hegel wants to understand truth just as much as subject as substance – understanding truth as *substance only* would imply that there is an objective order which the knower is to discover; if we are satisfied with this we could also be satisfied with the *Aufhebung* as forced upon us when thinking. But then we are moving away from the Hegelian project, since when it comes to knowing we would have to mean that we are dealing with the subject’s becoming identical to the object in thought, *and not also the other way around* – but the other way around is just as essential for Hegel.

With this in mind, I will suggest the following understanding of the *Aufhebung*. The meaning of *Aufhebung* is the turning of a condition into fact, which actually is an abolishing of the existence of the one for the other, but this again is not just explained by the secret workings of *Aufhebung*, but simply that what is working is just the last moment of necessity, namely *activity*. Activity is what turns the one into the other, and provides the real necessity – the condition and the fact is together only real possibility. So what then do we understand by activity?

To sum it up this far, we need to make clear how Hegel satisfies his own standard for speculative reason, how this relates to necessity, which again means a clarification of *activity*. We will do this by going into the relations between *being*, *nothing* and *becoming*.

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<sup>142</sup> Errol E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*, University Press of America, 1983, p. 199

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, s. 200

*Being* is the most abstract of all thoughts, intended to be the most simple and fundamental thing we can say about anything; in a sense being is what we want to consider as the genus of everything – that which conditions everything and as such also is that which is the most essential to everything that exists; that which for all that exists is common, and which we cannot remove from the thing without also removing everything else that exists. The simplest something we can say of something is that it is; we cannot speak of something unless we implicitly admit that it exists in one sense or another; the actual sense being irrelevant for the moment. To think this then is to think pure being, removing every determination, every quality of that which we want to think. Thinking pure being is to think pure indeterminateness and pure emptiness; we are not allowed to have a thought that has any particular content, we are not allowed to think anything at all. It seems that we must think *nothing* in order to think pure being. Can we make sense of thinking *nothing*? If we try, it soon becomes apparent that we fall into exactly the same characterizations as when we tried to think pure being; we can try to describe it as that which is completely undifferentiated, completely empty – as absence of all determination and content, something simply equal to itself. It seems like we have altogether the same as when we tried to think pure being – we set out to think *something* without thinking something concrete. But to fixate something is to determine it, which also means that differentiation is possible, in this case at least as far as between thinking and what is thought, and when dealing with pure being and nothing it seems like we can only fixate it as our thinking as such – and then being and nothing seem to be the same; pure thought or pure *Anschauung*. Can we really be satisfied at all by this apparent insight into the true nature of things? If we apply it, we soon see how absurd it would be to hold this as the final truth of everything; it *does* make sense to me to differentiate between my hundred thalers having being or not.

Then we can begin to speculate. For Terry Pinkard speculation is to add new determinateness to something, which cannot be deduced from what is already there – that is why it is called speculation.<sup>144</sup> This has something to it, but can also be misleading when it comes to Hegel. Is the new determinateness added from outside? Is it added in an arbitrary manner? For Hegel it surely must be in a non-arbitrary manner, since a necessity is to be involved in the “adding”, which is the transition to speculative reason.

In the *Logic* becoming is given as the speculative moment of being and nothing. Does this concept live up to the characteristics of speculative reason, which we have given above?

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<sup>144</sup> Terry Pinkard, “A Reply to David Duquette”, In: George di Giovanni (ed.), *Essays on Hegel's Logic*, State University Press of New York Press, 1990, p. 22



In becoming we have an affirmative unity, which is one because it involves being and nothing in their disintegration and transition as coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, each having a definite content but opposite determinations taking being and nothing as immediate respectively, and containing the previous movements from being to nothing and nothing to being as a result, only by negating each one as something isolated, while being an abstract unity as pure becoming, it is also concrete as withholding opposite determinations of itself in itself. The three first characteristics are present, what about the fourth?

When eliminating the dialectical and speculative moments of *becoming*, we remove the unity of its moments, and put them up against each other and affirm the difference. Here we have for instance Bishop Butler's "Everything is what it is, and not another thing." We have a statement of identity, of difference, and a relation between the two. Speculative reason would see this as a whole, treating the relation as just as essential to that which is, as its identity, and that it is not another thing; something which dialectical reason would stress, since otherwise we would not be able to differentiate this something that is from what it is not. In Butler's formulation the three moments of a logical thought are held together with a simple *and*; a medium which allows two opposite elements to be held together without further ado – something which is unproblematic for uncritical understanding.

In short, the concept of becoming lives up to the characteristics of speculative reason. Therefore, *becoming* is an expression of speculative thought – being and nothing *can* be held together – it is a real possibility. What then of this *holding together* as being rooted in strict argument? As indicated earlier, I will take this as a question about the *necessity* of the transition. Conceiving *necessity* as something other than formal necessity is vital, but at the same time very difficult: "[...] because it is really the Concept, only with its moments still conceived as actualities, transient and dissipated."<sup>145</sup> The Concept or the Notion – *the Begriff* –, is to be conceived also as subject, as we have seen. Actually, the Notion *exists* only in the thinking subject, as Herbert Marcuse states in *Reason and Revolution*.<sup>146</sup> The Concept or Notion is equal to the ego, or pure self-consciousness. Marcuse continues:

"Hegel's strange identification of the notion and the ego or subject can be understood only if we bear in mind that he considers the notion to be the activity of comprehending (*Begreifen*) rather than its abstract logical form or result (*Begriff*). We are reminded of Kant's transcendental logic in which the highest concepts of thought are treated as creative acts of the ego that are ever renewed in the process of knowledge."<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Errol E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*, University Press of America 1983, p. 199

<sup>146</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, Oxford University Press 1941, p. 155

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156

Based on this, I will suggest that the *necessity* is on the last analysis not outside of our thinking activity, our own conceiving of the matter. It follows that we must introduce necessity by ourselves, in thinking itself. *We* supply the necessity, and this necessity is nothing other than this holding together in a *free act of thought*; the necessity is a property of thought as will. When we hold this our own activity before us, we have nothing other than becoming as such. Marcuse continues: “The truth cannot be gleaned from the facts as long as the subject does not yet live in them but rather stands against them. The world of facts is not rational but has to be *brought* to reason, that is, to a form in which reality actually corresponds to the truth.” In thinking *becoming* as the truth of being and nothing we bring reason to a matter which shows itself as irrational – devoid of meaning – if we try to hold one part of the whole as a whole in itself.

What we see here is this: there is no real transition, in the sense of jumping from one place to another; there is a comprehension of thought acts as a whole which reveals the true meaning of these acts. And a comprehension is itself a thought. So there is no external matter or places external to each other involved, which eliminates the worry of an external unknown coming about changing matters; i.e. showing how it is not really necessary. Taken as a whole it really is necessary; we make it this way by our own activity upon our own activity; it is something self-sustaining; whatever is of the same kind which is also different, is already withheld within the whole. And all is mediated by will. This also means that we can hold being and nothing truly apart *if we want to*; we can dwell within the negative as much as we want until we ourselves through this experience of nothing as such and find that *this experience itself is nothing other than an experience of our own freedom* – ““Die höchste Form des Nichts für sich wäre die *Freiheit*, aber sie ist die Negativität, insofern sie sich zur höchsten Intensität in sich vertieft und selbst, und zwar absolute, Affirmation ist.”<sup>148</sup> In dwelling in the negative we experience ourselves as free – which here is identical to knowing ourselves as free; being essentially identical with the negative and being free in this, we also recognize that we can turn our inside out, as an instance of the negation of the negation, which comes about only by our doing so, a doing which is not arbitrary, but a bringing about of what is implicit in what has gone before in the dwelling itself; what has gone before is only what it is in itself; it waits for us to make it into what ought to be. Being and nothing on their own are *schlecht* – not as they ought to be – in thinking them in *becoming* we are bringing about what they ought to be, i.e. what they really are – reasonable as moments within change, or becoming.

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<sup>148</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/187

Is not then the necessity of speculative reason a necessity of freedom? Understanding freedom as having nothing over against oneself that is different from oneself, one is always free in speculative thought, since all empirical, external content, is removed. As content one has only thought, or one's own activity, or will in the form of thought, and the necessity consists in the bringing about of the inner relations of the concept – for Hegel freedom is identical to real internal necessity.<sup>149</sup> The thinking within the *Logic* is meant to be none other than the thinking of *Geist* itself – and what we can understand better now, is what Hegel means when the truth needs to be understood just as much as *subject* as substance; the necessity of truth is wholly within our own free activity, and it cannot come to itself as it is in itself, without thinking being permeated by the will of the human being.

Through thinking the dialectic of being and nothing, one can come to know that the condition is such that it really is possible to bring about the fact of the matter, or the goal, which, since I am a knower, is truth. What is left then is the activity, which is the unification – my willed thinking that changes the condition – the object that is to be known – into knowledge, which is the identity of being and nothing in becoming where both these moments are withheld in their difference. In a way we can speak of the speculative moment as the *telos* of the knower. According to Harris, the necessity we are dealing with, is indeed a teleological one:

“[True necessity is] the totality, and the principle of structure which embodies and determines the nature of the conditions, their mutual relations and their outcome. It is the determination of the parts or moments by the whole, which is self-determining, and as such is properly unconditioned. It is as it is, simply because it is so. This kind of necessity is teleological. Its end and outcome is known beforehand and is what guides the process of its realization throughout its course. It is the true conception of free action, namely, what is dependant only upon itself and not upon another. On the last resort, this is fully possible only for a self-conscious mind, but it is already immanent in organic wholes, which themselves create and regulate the conditions of their own self-maintenance by their own activity.”<sup>150</sup>

In the *Logic* the result is life, and the whole is present beforehand as self-consciousness; the meaning of *Geist*'s embodiment can then be understood as that which makes self-consciousness possible, the moment of coming out of its otherness in order to articulate the *I am* in the otherness and everything which goes along with it, especially the reconciling with this otherness which was needed for the actualization of oneself. For Hegel, this is only truly done in knowing.

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 8/103

<sup>150</sup> Errol E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*, University Press of America 1983, p. 200

Here we can get a better grip on the otherness we have in thought itself: the negating activity as such, freeing ourselves from every particular content, which is done within dialectical reason, which again really is due to the ego, or the telos of knowledge which is about to realize itself. A determinate negation comes about by the negating activity; it is not a simple formal indifference to identity – what goes before as an activity also becomes a part of the higher unity. Teleological necessity is a kind of necessity which is only conditioned by itself. As its opposite it has itself, and therefore teleological necessity is freedom. As knowers we have both the means and ends for realizing ourselves as this within thinking itself.

To understand this, it is important to realize that in the *Logic* the condition is nothing other than our own activity; what is there would not be unless we had made it so – there is nothing external, as there is in reality elsewhere, where conditions, facts and activity are related for instance in complex causal systems, and necessity is hard to see anywhere other than as relative necessity, since there are conditions and foreign elements everywhere – contingency is in abundance. This is so because we come into a world that for the most part is independant of our own activity. In *Logic* nothing is independant of our own activity; the first condition, that of being immediate, is nothing else than the beginning of our own thinking activity, which we try to understand and get a grip of in its most abstract form.

Understanding this we can also understand that there really is no sense in that one can hold being and nothing together in becoming as a suggestive interpretation. There is really nothing there to interpret – being and nothing has no coherent meaning on their own – the whole is first. Only in the category of becoming do the ceategories of being and nothing make sense, as abstractions made from *coming-to-be* and *ceasing-to-be*. We can come to see *Aufhebung* or reaching the speculative level as similar to a transcendental argument, *or in principle the same*, i.e. *Aufhebung* can be analyzed as a transcendental argument. In order to do this, thought must in some sense be understood as experience.<sup>151</sup> I suggest that what happens within *Verstand* and dialectics can be understood as an experience within thought, since one in moving from one category to another as happens in dialectics have before oneself objective change. *Aufhebung* then shows the condition or ground that must be present in order for such an experience to take place, i.e. the necessary condition. We know that the experience takes place, and hence the necessary condition must be actual. *Aufhebung* shows the category that is the necessary condition that gives coherent meaning to the earlier categories which only were

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<sup>151</sup> Helge Salemonsens has given a treatment of thought as experience in *Tenkningene som Erfaring*, Universitetet i Oslo 1994

abstractions from the category that was the necessary condition. When questions are raised about Hegel's claims about necessity within the system, this should be kept in mind.

We can now see that strict argument in relation to Hegel's *Aufhebung* can be understood as transcendental argument. This also applies to Fichte's understanding of the I through intellectual intuition; it is an argument in the sense of showing the necessary condition for self-consciousness.

One can agree with Hegel in that the *dialectic* of being and nothing seems to be successful, though successful when it comes to dialectics is to frustrate the sense of identity and difference between two opposites, here being and nothing – the result being that we could not really fathom what being and nothing are in themselves as pure concepts. Success when it comes to speculation is something else entirely, and does not follow directly from dialectics. Hence we could see immanent actuality in the movements of dialectics, while denying that speculation involves any such immanency, i.e. that there is any necessary transition from dialectics to speculation; Hegel fails then, since there is no strict argument at hand. However I think I have given a definitive sense to Hegel as succeeding when it comes to the demands of speculative reason in relation to *being* and *nothing*, on the grounds of the understanding of speculation and necessity given above – this *necessity* being a way to understand speculative reason in relation to *strict argument*. The problem is that the transition does not seem to be immanent in the matter itself; it seems to rest on something similar to Fichte's intellectual intuition, a moment where the *Aufhebung* is simply grasped. What one can do in thought by necessity, in something similar to an argument is to dialectically destroy content which is onesided and make a negative result come about, but out of the ashes and into the realm of the shadows one can only raise oneself. We will look into this issue again after treating Hegel's understanding of necessity in the logic of essence.

Although becoming is a *unity* of being and nothing, or more precisely of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, becoming *is also only* what it is through an actual distinction between coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be. When the unity is more strongly affirmed as it is when it is treated as united within a singularity, the distinction vanishes, and so becoming also vanishes: “Das Werden ist eine haltungslose Unruhe, die in ein ruhiges Resultat zusammensinkt.”<sup>152</sup>

Becoming itself can be subjected to *Aufhebung*, even though it itself already is an *Aufhebung* (of being and nothing). This is very interesting since it means that the *Aufhebung* not only has a technical significance as the transition from dialectics to speculation –

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<sup>152</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 5/113

speculation can itself be subjected to *Aufhebung*. Such an *Aufhebung* of becoming comes about because the affirmative unity of becoming is stressed, but what results is not a return to neither being nor nothing, which are already sublated determinations within becoming. The unity of becoming as sublated in a stable oneness is *determinate being* or *Dasein*; this comes about in that becoming is treated onesidedly, as an immediate unity in the form of being: “Das Werden so [als] Übergehen in die Einheit des Seins und Nichts, welche als *seiend* ist oder die Gestalt der einseitigen *unmittelbaren* Einheit dieser Momente hat, ist *das Dasein*.”<sup>153</sup> Here we can recognize the workings of understanding, in that Hegel explicitly states that the *Aufhebung* of becoming involves a *onesided* focus on unity. If understanding were not to be involved here, the *Logic* could not evolve further, and this should make it evident that all the modes of thought are essential to the *Logic*, if it is to evolve into concrete determinations at all. Purely speculative science then is not a science which exclusively remains within speculation.

The transition from the logic of being to the logic of essence is naturally not something arbitrary for Hegel. The doctrine of immanent development is not abandoned, but I can only give a general outline of it here. Being first passes over into quantity, which again passes over into measure. Some things in the world are such that if you increase its quantitative determination, it will after reaching a certain point change its qualitative determination wholly. A simple example of this is water. Heating it up it becomes a gas, and cooling it down will make it into solid matter or ice. These changes are not immediately present in its being, and such characteristics seem to hold only for certain matters, especially the actual degree at which the change in quality occurs. In that this is the case only for some matters, and further says something about their peculiar nature, in the sense of determinate but also *hidden* relation between its qualitative and quantitative aspects, the thought of essence arises, which says that since this relation is hidden while also belonging to the nature of the matter, it must have an essence. It is this essence that is implicit in measure – it is the hidden determining factor, that decides when and how the changes in the being of a matter are made.

The passing over of quality and quantity into each other which happens in the sphere of being is cancelled in the sphere of essence, where relation belong to the immediate determinations, as opposed to the determinations of being where relation only is implicit. When change occur within the sphere of being, something also disappears, while for the determinations of essence it is such that they remain what they are only in explicit relation to an other, as for instance is the case with the “positive” and the “negative.” The positive does

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 5/113

not make any sense by itself, while any being can indeed seem to be wholly independent of its opposite; that there is a pen in front of me does in no way immediately imply that there is a non-existent pen anywhere, which will become present if the pen were to become something negated. A negation of the pen would be any other object, or merely the lack of any object.

In ordinary consciousness we are in the sphere of being; everything just is what it immediately seems to be. In interacting with our environment its dependence on an aspect of reality where things are relational reveals itself, and this is the sphere of essence. We have then discovered the dual nature of reality, how things appear to be and how they really are: “Im Sein ist alles unmittelbar, im Wesen dagegen ist alles relativ.”<sup>154</sup>

## Essence

Within the logic of being everything is characterized by being immediate givens; there has not been made distinctions such as for instance *inner* and *outer*. In the logic of essence it is known that some things are essential and some things inessential or just appearances, and the matters at hand in the logic of being can all be matters that are just appearing or representing the merely outer aspect of reality, and as such they have no nature of their own – their nature can only be known in relation to what is their *inside*. The inside of things, their hidden nature, is understood to be a stable ground of shifting appearances – identifying anything within the logic begins with identifying such a ground. We can recall here that the different matters within the logic of being appeared as indifferent to each other. This is not so within the logic of essence, where opposing determinations are determined in explicit relation to each other, while they still also remain different determinations. For instance, the negation of appearance is essence and the negation of inessential is essential.

At first in the logic of essence such differentiation between appearance and essence is made, while the more concrete nature of the “hidden” aspect of the appearing things are treated later. An observation here can be made that a split has developed with regards as to what is to be treated as *real*. It is easy to see the point that only things that we can *see* are to be treated as real, while such things as “essences lying behind things” is only a matter of fantasy; however such an opposition is already *itself* grounded in the logic of essence in that an abstract difference between things merely thought and real things is taken to be something given. The

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<sup>154</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/230

thinking through of such kinds of abstract oppositions is the subject matter of the logic of essence.

When it is said that within the logic of being everything is immediate it is implied that nothing is mediated or produced by something else, it simply is what it is, which means that it has an identity of being *this* rather than *that*. The movement into the logic of essence means showing that any immediacy is indeed mediated – anything immediate is such that its immediacy is just an appearance, and really has its ground in something other than itself. This ground is essence. By thinking about anything at all and differentiating between the thing as thought and as being admits to a concept of essence in a minimal sense; if anything that were present to us were a full revelation of its true nature, there would be no need of going further than this intuition, since one in thought could not state anything more about the thing in accordance with its nature than was already present.

The concept of essence involves the relation of something immediate and the ground of this immediate, but the concept of essence is *itself* relational: essence must be understood directly in its relation to immediacy, since it *only* emerges when the immediacy of being after all proves *not* to be the simple immediacy it first appeared to be. The concept of essence is such that it cannot stand alone – we cannot meaningfully speak of essence in itself; only of the essence of something. Here we already can see dialectics emerge in that essence on the one hand is to be the ground for something, while essence itself cannot be understood otherwise than as something that has come to be out of a reflection on immediate being, which means that *being* can be understood to be the real ground of essence; essence, the mediacy or ground that has emerged from immediacy is itself mediated by immediacy. In this way the concept of essence is fundamentally pure negativity; at first it is the negation of any given, and secondly it is negated by this given – *and exactly in this that it is negated by the given that it at first itself negates, the essence of essence must be sought*. Essence is such that it itself disappears after first showing how what was immediate only was an appearance; first in the movement of essence disappearing it becomes the real ground of something immediate, making the immediate actual, and not *just* appearance. Here we can see the complexities of Hegel's development of the concept of essence; we are not left with a split in reality that is such that there are some hidden essential aspect of reality that *really is real*, on the contrary *the essential aspect of reality is such that it must relate itself to appearance, and only by such a relation essence actually becomes essence*. Here we can see how the relation of truth and illusion is understood by Hegel. Illusion also has the positive sense of being *Schein*, in the sense of being an appearance of essence or what is essentially truth; *Schein* is an appearing or shining forth



that both establishes truth as something real in itself (as the ground of the appearance), and appearance as something more than mere illusion, but something that one can indeed relate to in searching for the truth. The activity of phenomenology rests on this relation between truth or essence and appearance, as Hegel states in the introduction to the lectures on the history of art: “Doch der *Schein* selbst ist dem *Wesen* wesentlich, die Wahrheit wäre nicht, wenn sie nicht schiene und erschiene, wenn sie nicht *für* Eines wäre, *für* sich selbst sowohl als auch für den Geist überhaupt.”<sup>155</sup>

This is an attitude to essence that means that one does not need to transcend appearances completely in order to experience truth in its full actuality; since it is in the nature of the hidden aspect of reality that it *must* appear and that it is in this appearing that it is a fulfillment of itself, looking for truth must involve looking for it in what appears. It is also this thought that is the reason for the denial that someone can be essentially good without doing any actual good in the world. If having an essence of being good did not involve actually doing good, it would mean that it was part of the essence of being good not to do good – this is the consequence if essence is understood as something that can remain hidden while at the same time being the nature of something. With the concept of essence that Hegel develops in the logic, one can rather say that someone becomes essentially good when acting good, although this is not the whole picture, since essence also has an aspect of being hidden – what is important is that this hiddenness must not be understood as what is actual.

In that essence is understood as being the *essence of being*, the immediacy that is characteristic of the sphere of being is at first reduced to something *merely* inessential as well as something that is *merely* an illusion. By introducing the concept of essence we are not forced to abandon an understanding of immediacy, but we treat given immediacy as something inessential, this is the first reduction of immediacy that essence brings about. In that essence is the sheer negation of anything that is, the significance of being is reduced, but understanding essence in this way means understanding it as something that itself is something immediately being: if being is understood to be something and essence to be *something else*, essence is treated as something that is part of the sphere of being – the logic of *something* and *other* is part of the logic of being. In such an understanding a distinction is made between being that is of essence and being that is merely immediate – pure or insignificant illusion – and as such not of essence. The being that is not of essence is the inessential, while the being that is of essence

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<sup>155</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 13/21

is essential. We seem here to have a case of the categories being self-referring: essence can be essential.

In this movement it has been forgotten that essence at first was given determinacy as being the negation of being. In this we have an implicit contradiction in that the determinacy or being of essence is to be not-being. When essence now has been understood explicitly as being (as being essential being), it collapses. Essence is being just as much as the negation of being. A resolution is sought in treating the distinction of essential and inessential being as itself *inessential*, i.e. not of essence, or not truly characteristic of the nature of essence. Essence is rather to be the ground of anything within the sphere of being, so that there is no inessential being falling outside of it. This means that essence cannot be understood as some immediacy opposed to the immediacy of being – it then would be treated as something within the logic of being, and hence a contradiction of the kind we just saw appear. The resolution is not about dispensing of the concept of immediacy, but placing it within the sphere of being, where it properly belongs, and further to understand essence as something that is in relation to this immediacy. The immediacy is understood in relation to essence as something that is illusory or as Schein, as opposed to some inessential being; in this way essence can be the proper ground of anything within the sphere of being.

Essential illusion is *seeming*; an appearance which although being an immediate that has no real being of its own, is an appearance of what is real that reveals something of the true nature of the what is present, exactly because it is something appearing. This seeming is the seeming of essence itself; essence is now understood in relation to being in a way that satisfies how it was first conceived, namely as its negation – that some being seems to have this or that characteristic means that it has in its essence to seem to be such as it is.

Essence must not be understood as *that* which seems, since this implies that it has an immediate identity over against the seeming as such. But considering essence it actually seems to be pure self-relation – that which always remains the same as itself in the relation to appearances. In this way essence again seems to be a part of the sphere of being, or being what being actually is supposed to be, namely stable self-identical immediacy. According to Stephen Houlgate the proper way to understand what Hegel is aiming at here is a radical change in the concept of essence: “[...], the idea that the essence of things can be distinguished from the illusion of immediacy that essence projects is itself one of the illusions that essence projects.”<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Stephen Houlgate, “Hegel’s Critique of Foundationalism”, In: Anthony O’Hear (ed.), *German Philosophy Since Kant*, Cambridge University Press 1999, p. 40

The concept of essence *itself* projects an illusion, a seeming which is part of the concept itself when properly conceived. When this is understood, essence can be seen as a process which has three moments:

1. Essence as the negation of being seems to be immediacy
2. Essence seems to be distinct from its immediacy
3. Essence reveals itself to be seeming as such

Essence is to be understood as this process as a whole, and most concretely as *seeming as such*. Essence can now be taken both as a foundation of things in virtue of that essence itself is the process of seeming to be simple immediacy, and as something that underlies immediacy. Making such a split and relating them is part of essence. It all depends on understanding that essence does not underly things in a simple way, but that just that *must seem to be what actually is the case*. According to Houlgate, the debate between foundationalists and anti-foundationalists is caught in this illusion that essence itself puts up.<sup>157</sup>

We can now see the shape of the logic of essence appearing. It is such that it shows how elements are to be understood in explicit relation to each other. It would take us way too far to treat the other parts of this logic, but we will take a look on the concept of necessity, and see if we on the grounds of a clarification of this concept as it develops within the logic of essence can understand Hegel's claim to the effect that the necessity of the development of the content can be understood as something other than something that is intuited in the same manner as with Fichte's understanding of the I through intellectual intuition.

The investigation of the concept of necessity within the *Logic* happens within the treatment of actuality. Actuality is first conceived of as being or existence. What is, what exists, and what is actual is understood to be the same. *Being* however is more abstract than both existence and actuality; the latter two are more concrete concepts than being, although both are within being, as something that is. What exists *is*, and what is actual *is*. Actuality is not identical with what is – it implies something more concrete. *Existence* does not imply that it is an existence that has an essence; it can be an existence that is merely contingent, while what is actual incorporates a sense of actualizing essence. The essence actualized in the actual is the possibility of the actual; that the actual is the actual of something possible, i.e. that is understood in relation to something that has its own inherent structure, makes it different from

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 41

being and existence, in that what is and what exists is understood as something immediate, or simply self-identical; they have no further ground. In order to understand actuality then, *possibility* must be understood.

Possibility has so far been defined as what the actual actualizes, and hence not as the opposite of the actual, but as in itself or implicit what the actual is explicit. This is the positive sense of possibility; it is that which is implicit in what is explicit in actuality, and thus it is defined in relation to actuality. However, possibility also has a negative sense, in that it is *different* from the actual: although possibility stands in relation to actuality, it is not identical to it.

The actual is possible since it does not contradict itself; in this way the possible is what is self-identical in what is actual, or that which does not change even though what is actual changes – the possible remains indifferent towards its being actual or not. When the possible then is what is self-identical it soon seems that everything is possible – removing concrete relations in the world can make anything become possible, since we really are just talking of something that exists in whatever way we determine them subjectively:

“Von der Möglichkeit pflegt überhaupt gesagt zu werden, daß dieselbe in der Denkbareit bestehe. Unter dem Denken aber wird hier nur das Auffassen eines Inhaltes in der Form der abstrakten Identität verstanden. Da nun aller Inhalt in diese Form gebracht werden kann und dazu nur gehört, daß derselbe von den Beziehungen, worin derselbe steht, getrennt wird, so kann auch das Absurdeste und Widersinnigste als möglich betrachtet werden. Es ist möglich, daß heute abend der Mond auf die Erde fällt, denn der Mond ist ein von der Erde getrennter Körper und kann deshalb so gut herunterfallen wie ein Stein, der in die Luft geschleudert worden; - es ist möglich, daß der türkische Kaiser Papst wird, denn er ist ein Mensch, kann als solcher sich zum Christentum bekehren, katholischer Priester werden usw.”<sup>158</sup>

Deciding what really is possible then seems to depend on what is actual. Both A and not-A are possible, but on A becoming actual, not-A is no longer possible and will remain impossible so long as A is actual. In this sense what is possible is logically dependant on what is actual, even though not-A may be possible as something merely thinkable.

Hegel also claims that in a certain sense everything is also impossible. The reason for this is somewhat obscure, but it seems to rest on Hegel's doctrine that everything is inherently contradictory – at least anything with concrete content. Everything contains not only diverse but also opposite determinations. What I think Hegel is aiming at here is for instance the understanding of a thing as both a unity and a set of properties; that everything is both many

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<sup>158</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/283

and one. For the specific content of this dialectic one can either look at the treatment of the thing in the chapter *Die Wahrnehmung; oder das Ding, und die Täuschung* in *PhG*, or of the one and the many in the *Logic*. But everything is impossible only for an abstract understanding or dialectics that can only grasp a negative result, and “So ist z. B. nichts unmöglicher als dies, daß ich bin, denn Ich ist zugleich einfache Beziehung auf sich und schlechthin Beziehung auf Anderes.”<sup>159</sup> The determination of the I for Hegel is such that it both is just itself while it also is relation to others; it is one equally as it is diverse. Seeing how the I then can be something else than a contradiction and an illusion would involve speculation, where it is possible to see the I is self-identical *because* it is related to others.

There is now a distinction between those possibilities which have been actualized and those that cannot become actual because of those already actual. The actual is now one possible among others; the actual is an existing actual that has actualized one possible out of many, some of which now are impossible. There is nothing in the contingent possible that makes it actual, and why the actual is actual is contingent, since there are more possible actualities. The actual can then not simply be grounded in what is possible; it must be grounded in the possible in the sense that if the actual were not possible it could not be actual, but at the same time this is in itself not enough to explain why something is actual as opposed to some other possible actual. The actuality of something can be grounded in another actuality, but this actuality is contingent, if we do not allow such actualities which are actual just because they are.

Contingency for Hegel is defined in the following way: “Das Zufällige ist ein Wirkliches, das zugleich nur als möglich bestimmt, dessen Anderes oder Gegenteil ebenso sehr ist.”<sup>160</sup> The contingent then has two sides: actuality and possibility. As far as the contingent is an actual which has an opposite possible which is not actual, what is contingent must be groundless, or simply be because it is. We can recall now that the actual also was grounded in the possible at least in one sense; it would not be actual if it were not possible. We then seem to have a paradox, in that the actual is both grounded and groundless. This paradox is due to the dialectics or how the concepts change their meaning when thought through: “Das Zufällige hat also darum keinen Grund, weil es zufällig ist; und ebensowohl hat es einen Grund, darum weil es zufällig ist.”<sup>161</sup> John Burbidge has identified four stages within the movements of the concepts of actual and possible as constituents of contingency:

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<sup>159</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/283

<sup>160</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 6/205

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p.6/206

1. The contingent actual is thought of as immediately one with its possibility – with what it is in itself. It is simple existence without a ground. Yet, lacking a ground which it actualizes it loses its distinctive sense of ‘actual.’ It is simply *possible*.
2. The *actual* is thought of as distinct from the possible which is its ground. But the possible is not sufficient to ground its actuality as contingent, since it is only one of a number of *possibles*.
3. The *possible* is thought in its simple, positive sense of self-identity. But as such it does have actuality in the universal sense of ‘that which is.’ It is immediately *actual*.
4. The *possible*, thought of as distinct from, and reflectively derived from, the actual lacks actuality. But even so it has bare existence which is not reflectively constituted. Again it is immediately *actual*.<sup>162</sup>

1 and 2 represent a movement from actuality to possibility, while 3 and 4 represents movements from possibility to actuality. In considering these movements as a whole, or speculatively, quite another significance to these movements can be discovered. On the one hand we have an actual that explicitly becomes the very same as its implicit possibility, and on the other a possibility that explicitly becomes the actual that it implicitly was. An actual that is *the same* as its own possibility, and a possibility that cannot be otherwise than actual is something that is *necessary*. We can also see a collapse in meaning of the possible and actual when the former is *simple self-identity*, and the latter just is *what is*. Burbidge summarizes the movement in the following way: “Since the actualization of one possibility excludes its opposite from being actualized, the latter is thereby rendered impossible. But that whose opposite is not possible is necessary.”<sup>163</sup> Actuality understood in this way is a necessary that is both intrinsically grounded in its own possibility while at the same time groundless, in that it is not grounded in something other than itself. The meaning of contingency has now shifted into necessity by uniting the constituents of contingency, which makes it an actual whose opposite is not *actually* possible, and actually not possible because of what is actual, i.e. it is necessary.

This is not a satisfactory result however, in that we have only formal necessity and not real necessity – if we were to remain with this formal necessity we would not be able to explain an actual with a reference to something other than this that is happens to be. Only if this being of the actual can be showed to be connected to what is rational can satisfaction be reached, since we already have been lead forward to an analysis of necessity when we investigated being

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<sup>162</sup> John W. Burbidge, *Hegel on Logic and Religion*, State University Press of New York 1992, pp. 42-43

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 43

and essence. If we then do not accept the simple statement that the actual is because it is, we can look into what it also has as its ground, namely possibility. If we treat this sphere of possibility abstractly we again can think of the other possibles as really possible, and that the one actual possible must be investigated and made more concrete in order to determine why this possible is actual and not another.

That one actual is real and another unreal can be explained by its ground, the possible, as having an inherent dynamic, which makes it actual. The ground for what is actual is a real possibility, a possibility that, as opposed to others, becomes actual and so makes other possibilities impossibilities. The real possibility can be understood as the set of conditions that together are sufficient to make a change in relation to what is actual. Yet however, it is not possible for a real possibility to be distinct from actuality, since when all the conditions are combined it cannot longer remain a *just* possible – actuality must follow. Understood as a totality that is not just formal possibility in the sense of something self-identical, real possibility must become actual, and as such it is a necessity, although in a different sense than necessity had earlier. Because of some real possibility, something else must become actual – this is real necessity, a necessity which has its ground in the content of the real possibility. As such it is a relative necessity. What counts as a real necessity is decided with reference to some actuality together with possibilities that make only one result possible. We can see that this kind of necessity is a kind where the ground is in focus more than what is actual or groundless, which was the case with the former or formal necessity.

For Hegel there is a *possible other* to this real, but contingent necessity, and this is absolute necessity. We began with a treatment of the contingent as both grounded and groundless and hence necessary – this was the first moment of the dialectics. Then real necessity turned out to be contingent, as the other aspect of the dialectics. Taken together these two movements become the moments of absolute necessity, or the concept of complex actuality – this concept logically has no other possibility, since the different meanings of the concept of possibility is constituted as parts of the concept itself; in this sense it is intrinsically necessary. If we isolate these moments and ask for ultimate reasons for things, we fall back to a statement that they are because they are; what the concept of absolute necessity opens for is an understanding of necessity as self-determination. Burbidge writes:

“As that which constitutes its own ground – as self-constituting- it [the actual] is absolutely necessary. Thus absolute necessity gives rise to contingency as the ground of its own necessity. For it is contingent which moments are distinguished, separated and repelled from its actuality as its own conditions. Nonetheless, whatever moments

are thus rendered determinate, it is necessary that they thereby become the means to its absolute self-determination. Without these contingent, determinate moments, absolute necessity could not be established as necessary. This play of countervailing forces determines the actual to be necessary by annulling, even while establishing contingency. It generates, even as it transcends, the repelling moment of contrast and counterthrust. This necessity is necessity absolute. For it alone establishes the absolute necessity of contingency.”<sup>164</sup>

However the meaning of self-determination will only become explicit in the next chapter on subjective logic, but we can already see that necessity is closely related to freedom, or self-determination, in that it is something that is because it is.

*That* something happens can then be seen as the contingent aspect of the necessary – only when an act is made, can what is really necessary show itself, while this relation itself is absolute necessity. It can seem that it follows from Hegel’s philosophy that the only reason why there is anything at all must depend on an original will; a self-determination that in relation to what is necessary is contingent, but at the same time what is necessary is dependant on itself in relation to what is actual. If one were to reject the idea of God here, it would follow that in order to explain anything at all in the world, one would need to refer to other beings of will capable of self-determination, or a principle that says that an explanation of why there is anything at all, must involve a reference to human agency.

When we now understand that contingency is related to necessity, we can possibly gain a new understanding in relation to speculation and *Aufhebung*. There seems to be a moment in the development of something that determines itself through itself where contingency is reached – only by this can content and form coincide, since self-determination involves something that has its ground in that it simply is, and hence an exposition of it that reveals it as it is *must* involve such a contingent transition – something that rests only in itself, which is an act. This act in the logic is what is done in thinking, and *only through this*, does the logic become something self-determining. We can now come to see more fully the meaning of the necessity of contingency; if something is to be developed as resting on itself, as something self-determining or immanently necessary, it is *necessarily so* that there must be a moment where contingency enters, so that it can become something that is because it is – otherwise it would not be something self-determining, or something free. In the *Logic* this immediately happens in that the will and thinking unites at the moment of *Aufhebung*. But something further must be done, since it is still uncertain that the element of contingency or will that is introduced can find itself at home with what has led up to its introduction – the material for its realization; the

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 50



material that constitutes the ground for its activity. In the *Logic* this is part of the subjective logic, which shows how what is, is grounded in the *Concept*, the *Idea* or the human I. The transition to the subjective logic happens on the ground of reflections on the concepts of necessity, substance and causality. In understanding necessity the I recognizes *freedom*, at least formally as that which is because it is: the thinking I recognizes itself as the ground of being.

This transition from necessity to freedom Hegel calls the hardest one, since it involves understanding substance as dependant on what is wholly other to it – in the *Logic* it is the hardest one since the material that is treated must become one with the one who treats it.<sup>165</sup> The thinking subject must understand itself as the actual unity of thinking and being, and as such actually involves the act of *Aufhebung* that unites what is real with what is ideal. The thinking I must explicitly become the subject of the treatment as it is immediately present for itself. At the same time it can be regarded as the most simple transition in that the I just has to understand itself as something that is simply because it is, or as something that has its existence as a part of its essence:

“Das *Denken* der Notwendigkeit ist dagegen vielmehr die Auflösung jener Härte; denn es ist das Zusammengehen Seiner im Anderen mit *Sich selbst*, - die *Befreiung*, welche nicht die Flucht der Abstraktion ist, sondern in dem anderen Wirklichen, mit dem das Wirkliche durch die Macht der Notwendigkeit zusammengebunden ist, sich nicht als anderes, sondern sein eigenes Sein und Setzen zu haben. Als *für sich existierend* heißt diese Befreiung *Ich*, als zu ihrer Totalität entwickelt *freier Geist*, als Empfindung *Liebe*, als Genuß *Seligkeit*. - Die große Anschauung der spinozistischen Substanz ist nur *an sich* die *Befreiung* von endlichem Fürsichsein; aber der Begriff selbst ist *für sich* die Macht der Notwendigkeit und die *wirkliche* Freiheit.”<sup>166</sup>

As George Di Giovanni has pointed out,<sup>167</sup> Hegel develops an understanding of necessity that shows the interdependance of the two meanings of necessity that Aristotle recognizes in *De Interpretatione*. Aristotle points out that such events as sea battles become necessary once they have occurred – that they have occurred is a necessary fact in relation to the other actual circumstances; what is necessary also involves the deeds of men. This leads Aristotle to develop the two different meanings of necessity. One that is due to the rational ordering of the cosmos, for instance the cyclical movement of the heavenly spheres, and another that is due to indeterminacy of matter, for instance chance. In order to conceive reality as a self-contained process it must contain its own irrationality:

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<sup>165</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/305

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., pp. 8/305-306

<sup>167</sup> W.E. Steinkraus & K.I. Schmitz, *Art and Logic in Hegel's Philosophy*, Atlantic Highlands 1980, pp. 196-197

“The only order which it exhibits is one which takes shape out of the contingency of facts; and which, upon being realized, leads to a renewal of immediacy. And the only possible wisdom lies in the recognition that there is no situation too irrational to serve as the basis of new order; and no degree of order which does not generate its own opposite.”<sup>168</sup>

The irrationality I propose is a result of dialectics with a negative outcome, while the *Aufhebung* which happens only because it is thought the way it is, is the point where rationality becomes the positive aspect of the *Logic*. I further propose that *Aufhebung* must be contingent if it is to exhibit its material a immanently self-determining in a necessary way. That understanding then again reduces or concentrates the result of *Aufhebung* and makes it an abstract unity which again develops into irrationality through dialectics, is also necessary in order to produce a new level of rationality. The result then is that a self-determining system must contain both contingency and irrationality in order to be truly self-determining. But making order out of what is irrational or merely contingent, is what shows that something is *actually* self-determining; it shows that it is not negativley limited by its opposite. Ordering something as a self-determining material involves using material that is merely contingent and giving it the shape of a self-determining system.

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 197

## VI. SUBJECTIVE LOGIC AND TOTALITY: OPENNESS OR CLOSURE?

The second volume of *WdL* is called the subjective logic, and is divided further into three sections: Subjectivity, Objectivity and the Idea. The first section deals with the Concept in general, the judgement and the syllogism; it is here that we find a treatment of thought considered as subjective inferential activity.

The next part of the *subjective* logic is objectivity; this is a very important part, since it is here that thought is to gain an immediate connection with what usually is considered to lie outside of it; that which thought and concept are *about*. We will pay special attention to this since it will be here that thought is to be understood as what things are in themselves, according to the doctrine that was discussed earlier, where thought was understood as the essence of things. It is here that an explicit answer to the question of how thought links up with being will be answered. The last section, the one about the Idea, contains a treatment of life, cognition and the *absolute* Idea, which contains contains a treatment of the method as such, and it is here we will finally return to the question raised in the introduction in relation to the method.

Freedom is the mode of relationship proper to the Concept as it is understood in the *Logic*.<sup>169</sup> As we saw in chapter III, something is free for Hegel when it is at home with itself in what is other to it. We can understand this here to imply that it is here, in the subjective logic, that we encounter the concepts that properly and explicitly can express something as a free and self-developing whole, meaning further that it is here that the method can be treated.

At first it could seem impossible to state in words what a concept is, since in order to do this we would have to have a concept of the concept, and then we are faced with the problem of how something *can be about itself* – the same problem that we faced when trying to understand the I through intellectual intuition. How can an expression of something *be* what this something is? If the expression is all that there is to something, we are not dealing with an expression, since an expression is always an expression of something. If we then think of it as something that is just immediately existing as it is, we are back to where the *Logic* began, with being in general and clearly then not the Concept as such. In *Enz.* §160 Hegel describes the Concept thus: “Der Begriff ist das *Freie*, als die *für sie seiende substantielle Macht*, [...]”<sup>170</sup> – and as this *might* it is similar to Fichte’s I, in that it is what exists through itself, and indeed the Concept for Hegel *is* the I, or pure self-consciousness, as far as it is something concrete and

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<sup>169</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 6/246

<sup>170</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/307

developed.<sup>171</sup> We can then define the Concept in relation to the I, as the I considered as something abstract. However, such a definition would be strictly relative to our understanding of the I. Hegel suggests that a preliminary understanding of what the Concept is, is rather to be found when one considers the Concept as the third in relation to being and essence, or to what is immediate, and what is mediate or reflected.<sup>172</sup> As truth, or something which is necessary, as something which is both grounded and existing through itself, the Concept needs to be something that has emerged through dialectics and *Aufhebung*. The Concept is to be understood as that which is the absolute foundation, but it can only be that by having made itself this.<sup>173</sup> Even though being in the dialectic is the first, and essence seems to belong to the foundation of things, they are both abstract; the Concept is the concrete unity of these two, but if one begins with the Concept, one begins with an abstraction, and rather with being. The Concept needs to emerge from being and essence, in order for it to appear in its proper form.

Even though a single thing in the world is an instance of an universal, the single thing does not in any way reduce the universal. On the contrary, the universal remains unaffected by its relation to particulars; no matter how many or how few existent things there are in the world, and no matter the nature of these things, the universal remains the same, i.e. what it means to exist remains the same. Moreover the universal remains the same as itself even in relation to the concept of existence; the nature of the concept of existence does not in any way change the nature of the universal, or the concept as such. Actually it is the case that things receive their most fundamental nature, as something existing independantly in such a manner that it can justifiably be treated as saperate from other things, only through the Concept. In a similar way Hegel introduces the universal in *PhG*: “Ein solches Einfaches, das durch Negation ist, weder Dieses noch Jenes, ein *Nichtdieses*, und ebenso gleichgültig, auch Dieses wie Jenes zu sein, nennen wir ein *Allgemeines*; das Allgemeine ist also in der Tat das Wahre der sinnlichen Gewißheit.”<sup>174</sup> Here is an example of this: as much as it *now* can be day it can also be night. Night and day is not what the *now is*, and the now remains completely indifferent to being either day or night. In this way the universal always remains equal to itself in confrontation to what is other to it, and in this sense the universal is mighty and free.

The free nature of the Concept means that an exposition of it cannot be an exposition *of* the Concept, but rather it must be the Concept itself explicating its own structure, and this is

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<sup>171</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 6/253

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 6/245

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 6/245

<sup>174</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 3/85

made possible through being an explication of the structure of the I, or that of thought thinking itself.

The Concept as universal is developed into particular and individual, which taken together with the different forms of judgement forms the syllogism. We are here still dealing with thought as subjective, as something which does not necessarily have to conform to any object in the world. Hegel has no problem with treating judgements of the sort “this wall is green” as something that can be adequately decided with reference to immediate perception, in the sense of being a correct judgement.<sup>175</sup> Content such as “this wall is green” however is abstract in difference to concrete which implies a relationship between an object and a concept, where the latter determines what the former ought to be.

When we treat thought as something subjective, something that is an expression of our particularity even though it has universal content as well, something that always expresses something incomplete and fallible in relation to objects, we have already implicitly an understanding of what thought ought to be in order for it to be objective, and when we shift our focus from truth as a subjective claim that is to correspond to objectivity, to a reflection about the nature of truth, i.e. a relation between objectivity and how objectivity ought to be, we are closing in on Hegel’s understanding of truth.

Having this understanding of truth in mind, we can see that in a certain sense truth is a matter of value; an object *ought to be* what its concept is. On this ground one can make much richer forms of judgements than is the case where a judgement is conceived of something which is to correspond to some kind of immediacy, for instance perception. Hegel compares the transition from subjectivity to objectivity to the ontological proof of God’s existence. In short, the ontological proof of the existence of God rests on the idea that God cannot be something that is merely thought, since the concept of God implies that God is a being of which nothing more perfect is conceivable, and something which not only exists in thought but exists actually is more perfect than that which does not exist; hence God exists. Or stated otherwise, since God is that whose concept includes its being within itself, God cannot be something merely thought, since then one would not be thinking of God. Applying this to the Concept treated in *WdL*, we get that the Concept includes being within itself, and conceiving it otherwise would mean thinking about something else. It also includes subjectivity and objectivity in itself and gives these concepts meaning. The thoughts that are presented within the subjective logic then also apply to objectivity; the syllogism, the judgements and the forms

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<sup>175</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/322

of universal, particular and individual state the formal structures of objects as far as we speak of any object that is intelligible.

The Concept as universal, or the concept of the concept, that which remains equal to itself in relation to anything, *is itself a particular among other universals and as such the universal is also a particular*. This at least is true within a system of concepts as presented within *WdL*; there are other universals within the system of concepts in addition to the concept of the universal as such. Through understanding particularity as something that is completely different to anything else, a bare particular that has nothing in common with anything else, we really have a concept of the universal before us, which can be revealed dialectically by looking more closely into what really is stated implicitly in such an understanding of particularity as was just stated. Removing anything universal from the particular and treating it as something of which nothing more can be said than that it is completely different in relation to anything else, we have no means of differentiating the particulars from each other. Any particular is such that it is different from anything else, and this holds for all particulars, and hence all particulars are really the same – in relation to any particular that we are confronted with, we could only say something to the effect that “this is something completely different from anything else.” Since this is the nature of the particular, it is really a universal – while all particulars should be different in relation to all other particulars they really are the same, or more precise, there is only one and the same particular, i.e. actually it is a universal – pure difference implies pure identity.

The concept of particular gains a more coherent meaning within *WdL*; the universal is also a particular – it is one concept within the whole of the *Logic*, and the *Logic* contains other universals, which means that they also are instantiations of the concept of universality as such which is treated in the subjective logic – and so the particular can be understood as something which instantiates a universal, and while also different from the universal, it is not pure difference, or something that is completely different from everything else.

The moment of particularity is also universal to the system of concepts; the moment of difference is instantiated throughout the system, for instance the concept of nothing, quantity, or essence in general – essence is that which is different from being. But in that the moment of particularity is universal to the system, it is an individual; now that we can understand the particular as that which contains universality, we have the concept of individuality, which itself also is an instantiation of the principle of unity within difference, or of speculation, in that it is a unity which has become equal to itself only through what is different to it. The individual is

the universal that has become truly one of a kind since it stands in an essential relationship to particularity.

Objectivity in the subjective logic is presented in the forms of mechanism, chemism and teleology. Within mechanism the objects are existing on their own, outside of each other, and initially indifferent in relation to other objects; objects of the mechanical sort can in principle exist on their own. Any relation between such objects are external, which means that no matter what relation one object has to another, the relation will not affect their essential nature. This clearly is similar to the category of being in general, while chemism corresponds to essence, since here the objects are subjected to such laws that make them intrinsically related to each other; the essential nature of one object is revealed only in its relation to another object, and their properties change when they enter specific kinds of relationships, as for instance when acid and base neutralize each other to form a salt. In teleology the object becomes transparent to itself, or self-related, corresponding to the Concept or the I, but this is not explicit in external teleology, where the object is subjected to an end which is not contained in the object itself. In external teleology the end or purpose is introduced from without, and the object is made to realize this end by manipulation of how it behaves according to mechanical and chemical principles. In contrast, internal teleology means that the end of an object is immanent in the object itself, i.e. it is its own end, such that the concept or purpose of an object can stand in an infinite relationship and form a whole, such as we find in the living organism, which behaviour primarily involves directing its parts in order to sustain itself as a whole. The objective moment of such a whole, for instance the movements and activities of its parts, both chemical and mechanical, happens on the grounds of reasons found in the concept of the organism.

It should not be necessary to make a case for Hegel not being a reductionist – at least not a reductionist in the materialist sense, but it might be necessary to mention that Hegel is also not a reductionist in the spiritualist sense; he is not a monist. At least not a monist in the sense of being *opposed* to dualism. Giving a distinction between monism and dualism as theoretically absolutely *opposed* to each other is itself an expression of dualism. With the *Logic* as a whole Hegel gives the conceptual framework that is needed to see that unity and opposition are both essentially part of the whole, which is a third in relation to these two, i.e. not a simple unity. Hegel can be seen a monist in that in thought one has the unity of things, but this unity itself contains difference, and this difference is necessary for the unity to be a proper unity, i.e. not abstract unity. The principle of differentiation can for instance be seen in the treatment of mechanism, chemism and teleology – they must all be present if reality is to be understood as a whole.

Here, with the Idea, or the immediacy of concept and objectivity in the living organism, we return to where we began. Hegel explicitly states that the Idea is the Subject-Object,<sup>176</sup> i.e. in the language of idealism which we encountered in the first chapter, the Idea is the unity of the subject and object. It can also be understood directly in relation to what we said about Hegel's concept of truth; the Idea is the object unified with its concept, which is truth in the fullest sense.

Life is only the Idea in its immediacy, and immediacy as something merely posited we have seen as something that really is dependant, or mediated. When negativity or difference is introduced within the concept of the Idea, we have cognition and willing, or the practical and theoretical relation to the whole. The Idea is now becoming fully self-transparent, in that a split within it occurs, such that objectivity and concept do not correspond to each other unless it is either actually cognized or willed, and both require that the Concept, with its concrete existence in the I, makes the object accord to itself. The true and good is now the purpose or concept in a more concrete form, which the I realizes in objectivity. However:

“Im Endlichen können wir es nicht erleben oder sehen, daß der Zwecks wahrhaft erreicht wird. Die Vollführung des unendlichen Zwecks ist so nur, die Täuschung aufzuheben, als ob er noch nicht vollführt sei. Das Gute, das absolut Gute, vollbringt sich ewig in der Welt, und das Resultat ist, daß es schon an und für sich vollbracht ist und nicht erst auf uns zu warten braucht. Diese Täuschung ist es, in der wir leben, und zugleich ist dieselbe allein das Betätigende, worauf das Interesse in der Welt beruht. Die Idee in ihrem Prozeß macht sich selbst jene Täuschung, setzt ein Anderes sich gegenüber, und ihr Tun besteht darin, diese Täuschung aufzuheben. Nur aus diesem Irrtum geht die Wahrheit hervor, und hierin liegt die Versöhnung mit dem Irrtum und mit der Endlichkeit. Das Anderssein oder der Irrtum, als aufgehoben, ist selbst ein notwendiges Moment der Wahrheit, welche nur ist, indem sie sich zu ihrem eigenen Resultat macht.”<sup>177</sup>

Here we can discover a Fichtean theme, in that otherness is posited, and necessarily so, but although Hegel admits that a complete reconciliation is not possible as something either seen or experienced in finitude – an *Aufhebung* plays its role in that the incompleteness itself is made into a necessity. Truth is something dependant, something that is in need of a foundation, but this dependancy is a necessity for it in order to become what it is, which happens through the cancelling of the dependancy, or the subjugation of the ground, taking it into its own being.

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 8/309

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 8/367



The theoretical attitude which we will now give a compressed characterization of is what Hegel calls the genuine position of rational cognition,<sup>178</sup> which again forms the transition into the absolute Idea.

For thought as subjective, the world or the objective is found as something which is already there; life appears as something existing on its own. Thought thinking itself reaches an understanding and certainty of the implicit identity of this appearance with itself in the Idea, and cognition then becomes the positing of the difference between thought and being as nothing in itself, i.e. as an illusion.<sup>179</sup> The certainty remains abstract and subjective until its content is received by the objective – this is the theoretical relation to the world, which is a movement where subjectivity becomes objectivity, in contrast to the practical relation, where the subjectivity which has become objectivity removes the contingencies and illusory forms of the world as appearance in its drive for realizing the good.

Although Hegel finds the analytical and synthetical methods to be essential and giving excellent results when used within appropriate fields, they cannot provide an adequate philosophical understanding.<sup>180</sup> In short the analytical method starts with a concrete given and removes what seems inessential and giving what is left the shape of independent universal determinations, while the synthetic starts with the universal and determines it as something concrete – for instance a deduction of the character of something existing from certain principles. The inadequacy of such methods is that they remain within understanding, has presuppositions that are simple givens and the cognition achieved does not proceed further than a formal identity – here a philosophical consciousness will be left with assurances in relation to questions of ultimate truth, as we saw in chapter II. The method of *WdL* is such that it is to give to its content a form that is satisfactory *philosophically*, while for other sciences that are already satisfied with its objects as something presupposed and immediate such a method would seem superfluous.

As far as the will works upon the world it has certain ends in mind, each consisting of bringing the I and the world together, but at the same time each end is a finite end, and such finite ends are moreover themselves means to a larger end. Within finitude the will is then faced with an infinite series of ends, each realization maybe coming closer to it, but the final end will never be reached. Unless there is postulated a final end that ought to be realized, acting in the world can seem pointless, as far as the realization of the infinitude of the I in the

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 8/387

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 8/377

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 8/383

world is something that is the ultimate ground for acting. For Hegel a striving that will never be satisfied is resolved when it is realized that “der Endzweck der Welt ebenso vollbracht ist, als er sich ewig vollbringt.”<sup>181</sup> That the ultimate end is never achieved is itself to be understood rather as an expression of that the ultimate end in that acting in the world as an individual requires that there is actually something left to do; to be in a position where acting is both possible and desirable is the ultimate end, since the will then wills itself, and the end becomes infinite.

As we saw in relation to *Aufhebung*, everything depends on that the thinking subject explicitly involves itself in the material which first was the objectivity that the subject was to determine itself in relation to, i.e. the material itself was to decide how it was to be thought. In that the subject through the negative result brings itself actively in relation to the material that had proven to dissolve itself in dialectics, we have an example of the idea of cognition coming to involve the idea of willing. Within the logic, as the material is not an external world, the idea of willing along with the idea of cognition together come to form the absolute idea. In life the Idea was only something in itself, not fully developed, while in cognition the Idea was for itself, in that it worked upon something external that it needed in order to be actual. While the absolute idea resembles Spinoza's substance in which everything is and is conceived – Hegel explicitly states that it is the same as Aristotle's *no sis no se s*.<sup>182</sup> With the absolute Idea, that was implicit in all the previous stages throughout the *Logic*, is now to cease to be our object and rather become its own object.

When the absolute idea is reached, or when the concept and objectivity has become fully transparent, there remains surprisingly little to say; the absolute Idea has for its content what has gone before, while the absolute idea as such is pure form, and so here the method is treated explicitly, in that a method is the *Logic* simply in its formal aspect.

When thinking through material methodically now, any immediate is known also to be mediated; the movements of the thought forms that have evolved through the *Logic* is now known explicitly.

It is especially important for the method to not resist involving oneself in what presents itself as determinate, since it is known within the method that although the beginning is incomplete, it is also the case that truth can only be known in its full extent by negating what is immediate or the beginning:

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p. 8/387

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 8/388

Auch die Methode der Wahrheit weiß den Anfang als ein Unvollkommenes, weil er Anfang ist, aber zugleich dies Unvollkommene überhaupt als ein Notwendiges, weil die Wahrheit nur das Zu-sich-selbst-Kommen durch die Negativität der Unmittelbarkeit ist. Die Ungeduld, die über das *Bestimmte*, es heiße Anfang, Objekt, Endliches, oder in welcher Form es sonst genommen werde, *nur* hinaus und unmittelbar sich im Absoluten befinden will, hat als Erkenntnis nichts vor sich als das leere Negative, das abstrakte Unendliche, - oder ein *gemeintes* Absolutes, das ein gemeintes ist, weil es nicht *gesetzt*, nicht *erfaßt* ist; erfassen läßt es sich nur durch die *Vermittlung* des Erkennens, von der das Allgemeine und Unmittelbare ein Moment, die Wahrheit selbst aber nur im ausgebreiteten Verlauf und im Ende ist.<sup>183</sup>

We can see that what has been known throughout the subjective logic, is now posited as the way to go about when one wants to know any material.

Hegel states that to hold fast to the positive in its negative is the most important characteristic of rational cognition<sup>184</sup> – although it is known that the immediacy of any material is illusory, it is vital that one returns to this determination in the end, since this means the reconciliation with what in human experience presents itself as an immediate. This further means that the illusory character of the immediate rather is known as the *Schein* of essence which itself is necessary for essence – in this way the immediacy which is experienced in appearances is saved and itself made essential.

The method in its formal aspect can be stated in many ways, and since the content of logic itself has the character of being formal, a full statement of the method would involve a full statement of the logic. However, if we stick with the most abstract determinations, we can for instance say that the method consists of moving from immediacy to immediacy, or from being to essence, and then to mediated immediacy or the Concept. Another way to state it is that the method consists of treating something speculatively, dialectically and with *Verstand*. What is vital though, is that *all* these aspects are involved – one can for instance start with dialectics and expect that speculation sooner or later will enter the scene by itself – dialectics needs concepts that first are treated with the *Verstand*, or which are presented as universal determinations over against concrete material; only then can dialectics reveal the concreteness of the material again, and open up for speculation. *It is not enough to simply watch a material develop itself* – although such a state of passivity through which the thinking subject puts itself in relation to the object is essential, speculation requires that the subject enters actively into the content, and shapes it according to the Concept.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 6/571

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6/561

<sup>185</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 8/390 ff.

In the end it appears that what holds the system together is just the thinking activity of the philosopher – reflective, dialectical, speculative and creative, while the system itself is plastic, in the sense that it can change while remaining the same – this echoes the fragment *Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus* of 1796: “Der Philosoph muß ebensoviel ästhetische Kraft besitzen als der Dichter.”<sup>186</sup>

Against the charge that Hegel reduces the individual to the universal (or collective) in one great and final synthesis, this should now be seen as a onesidedness that is due to an abstract understanding which refuses to go into the complexity of the concrete relations. A view that takes the *Logic* seriously will understand that the universal requires the individual as equally independent over against it, since truth in itself requires otherness in order for it to truly be. This thought anchors human beings within earthly matters, since it by contemplation on the transcendent, for instance as represented by the realm of shadows of the *Logic*, comes to realize: the essence of essence is manifestation.

If the end is stated as a totality and the previous movements are forgotten, what is left is not the totality, but the beginning. In this sense the totality is something dependant, and so there can never be a closure that does not allow a further evolution. If the moment of negativity, the differentiation that a speculative whole is dependant on, is forgotten, it becomes something abstract, and hence not a totality. By now it should seem rather strange to ask the question about whether the system is closed or not – the easy answer would be: it is both open and closed. But contradictions are not satisfactory, and neither is paradox. Further, a closed system implies something that is unfree, something stale and potentially dangerous for the mind, and hence unbecoming of the human being. And the system is closed. However, one of the lessons of the *Logic* is that there can be nothing that is fully self-enclosed or self-related without otherness within it, and moreover the otherness must be actual for the self-enclosure to be actual. Otherness is hence something presupposed. But it is also the case that self-relation is nonetheless first and original. Stated otherwise one can say that the *Logic* gives the certainty that thought will be able to meet any particularity and externality and give it the shape of itself as actual knowledge, and this knowledge remains something that only is potential while one remains within pure thought. The system is therefore not only open to, but also dependant on its openness, for only through what is received from outside can it realize itself. It is also one of the lessons of the *Logic* that when tracing the particular you will only encounter its tracks as disappearing, and as disappeared when you reach it. There the universal will be. Only when

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<sup>186</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Frühe Schriften*, Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, p. 1/235

seeing that the universal is first, can the particular be found. So, in Hegel's system the *Logic* is placed first, as the system of universal determinations of everything that is, which become actual in the philosophy of nature and spirit, representing the Idea in externality and its return to itself, respectively.

As a distillation of what has been treated throughout the different chapters I present the following: the method which is the ground of *WdL* can be used in relation to external material, but this material will not remain indifferent in relation to the internal content of *WdL*, since this internal content really expresses the essential aspects of the method. The content of *WdL* is an expression of a self-developing whole, the content of which in order to be self-developing immanently and necessarily, needs to be something which is not only rid of opinions and taken as it immediately is, but also dialectical and speculative. Speculation relies on *Aufhebung*, which must necessarily be contingent, while also resting on a content that is previously developed dialectically which is shown to be resting on the necessary condition that the *Aufhebung* reveals. The *Aufhebung* therefore both necessary and contingent; it is necessary in the sense of being a necessary *condition* for there to be an experience in thought of the abstractions of the *Verstand* and movements of dialectics; *that* this condition is reached is on the other hand contingent, and necessarily so, if the *Logic* is to be a self-developing whole. This further means that a question that asks for the ultimate truth and justification of the conclusion of an external material treated with the method given in the *Logic* will be answered in the *Logic* itself and involve and evolve around such things as dialectics and speculation. As an answer to the question of the openness or closure of the system, it is answered that the system is closed, but a kind of closure that entails openness in that it is a self-developed whole that includes and depends on negativity and otherness.

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